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UNIVERSALIST BELIEF:

OR THE

DOCTRINAL VIEWS

OF

UNIVERSALISTS.

BY ASHER MOORE.

Philadelphia:
GIHON, FAIRCHILD & CO.

1841.

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PREFACE.

It has been said by a wise man, that "of making books there is no end." And the author of the following pages may well say in the clumsy language of Bunyan's Apology,

> "When at the first I took my pen in hand,
> Thus for to write, I did not understand
> That I at all should make a little book
> In such a mode."

My first intention was merely to furnish a series of newspaper articles, giving the principal reasons and proofs of the Universalist's faith. But in an early stage of this labor, and at the suggestion of a friend, I determined to extend the original plan, and to bring together a sufficiency of matter to compose a small volume. And I cannot but regret that the limits of this book obliged me to be too brief in the consideration of several important points of doctrine, and to omit entirely some others that seemed to demand attention. It was designed that the subject of the Trinity should be introduced and examined at considerable length; but it was soon perceived that the entire plan could not be executed within the limits prescribed; and it was

thought that this particular topic could be omitted with as much propriety as any other. It is believed that a tolerable connexion is preserved without it; and perhaps if it had occupied a few chapters, the value of the work would not have been materially enhanced.

Most of the following chapters have appeared in successive numbers of the "NAZARENE," from which they were transferred into the form of a book. And, considering the manner in which they were written and published, it is hoped that the reader will make suitable allowances for the *length* of some of the chapters, and also for whatever want of *connexion* may be desirable. If the entire work had been prepared for the press before any part was lodged with the printer, it is quite possible that it would have appeared with fewer faults than will now be detected. The book, however, will not pretend to abide unharmed the searching glance of the critic. It is designed to make known to such as need the information, *what* Universalists believe, and *why* they believe. And in the hope that it may tend, in some small degree, to the accomplishment of this necessary object, and with fervent prayers that the blessing of God may attend it wherever it shall go, it is humbly submitted by a servant and lover of man.

INTRODUCTION.

The object of this work is to give a brief statement of the principal articles of Universalist belief, and of the reasons by which they are supported. I am well aware that this labor has been repeatedly performed, and far more ably than the reader has any good reason to suppose that it will now be executed. But I write chiefly for the benefit of those who are yet unacquainted with the doctrine of Universalism, and its unanswerable proofs. There are many such scattered throughout the land; and we have reason to hope that the present undertaking may be the means of enlightening some minds, which might otherwise still remain in ignorance of what we really believe. This unpretending little volume may reach some places where but few, perhaps none of our numerous publications have ever been known. And it is possible that it may contain matter entirely new to some who shall read it, and become the instrument in the hands of God of leading them into the enjoyment of that blessed Gospel, which is "glad tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people."

It may also be observed that new converts are constantly coming into our churches; and we may suppose that they are desirous to obtain a clear understanding of the grounds of our faith, and to be more fully instructed in the way of life and salvation. And to such, we trust, our present labor will be acceptable. The power of prejudice is not easily broken; and after a man has been brought to the knowledge of divine truth, he may be unable to divest himself at once of the influence of prepossession. We are so much the creatures of education and habit that strong and vigorous efforts are needed to free us from the errors of early years. Some of the early disciples of Jesus, having before been Jews, "taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." There are persons among us who have little knowledge of our doctrine, any farther than to feel convinced of the fact that all mankind will be finally blessed in Jesus Christ. They do not understand the whole foundation of this blessed faith, so as to be able to proceed understandingly from the first principles of the Gospel of Christ, to the ultimate results of God's economy in the moral government of his intelligent creation. And they may be profited even by an imperfect statement and

feeble defence of our peculiar views on the general subject of Christian Theology. Nay, such as are well instructed in these matters, may strengthen their faith and confirm their hopes, and be better prepared to answer the inquiring and confound the perverse, by a renewed examination of the grounds and the reasons of our faith.

There are many persons in this community who are favorably impressed with Universalism, but who are almost entirely ignorant of every truth peculiar to this system of doctrine. Their habits of thought are all opposed, but the feelings and desires of their hearts are in its favor. They are shocked with the merciless horrors of the doctrines which they hear in their own churches, and always pleased and comforted when they hear anything like that GOSPEL, which is "good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people." They are feeling after "a more excellent way," and panting for the waters of life. They are worthy of the true bread of God, that cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world. And if they could only be brought to see the errors which they have been taught, and to understand that the Gospel reveals the great and successful plan of universal redemption from sin and death, they would embrace the whole truth of God with rejoicing

spirits. They are, in their hearts, inquirers after Universalism; though they may not take the proper steps to obtain an acquaintance with this doctrine. They are subject to many restraints, and do not feel free to attend our churches and hear our preaching. But they will nevertheless *read* when they find opportunity. And we can reach at least some of them through the medium of the press, when we could not gain access to them in any other way. The silent messenger will go where the speaking witness cannot be heard. And in the present state of society we are required to avail ourselves of every opportunity to shed *abroad* the light and the knowledge of God's truth.

Other reasons might be presented to justify our repeated attempts to explain what we believe. We are falsely accused. Our opposers have long pursued the unfair policy of imputing to us doctrines which we never advocated nor believed. Many honest people believe these slanderous reports; and, without any knowledge of Universalism, they feel that they would be guilty of a high offence against God, if they were to enter our places of public devotion, and obey the injunction of Paul, to "prove all things." They condemn us unheard; and persecute us—they know not why. What have we ever done that we are thus dreaded and shunned? Have

we ever laid violent hands upon the ark of the Christian covenant? Have we ever trodden under foot the Son of God, and accounted the blood of the everlasting covenant an unclean thing? Have we sought to remove the foundations of Christian hope, or to take from the afflicted and dying the support and comforts of religion? Have we endeavored to subvert the peace and good order of society, and to induce sinful man to cast off fear and restrain prayer? What have we done? Reader, the whole sum and substance of our offence is, that we have avowed our "trust in the living God, *who is the Savior of all men*, specially of those that believe."

We are sorry to say that we do not expect any thing like justice at the hands of our determined and violent opposers. They never present our doctrine in its true light before the people. There is nothing in what we really believe to shock the feelings of any man who has ever felt the influence of Christian truth. We should not be despised by any man who is worthy to be called a follower of Christ, if our doctrine were well understood. They who know the least of our faith are the most bitter in their opposition. And the policy of our adversaries has ever been to misrepresent our views, and thus keep the people in ignorance of what we do believe and

teach. We are classed with Deists and Infidels, and denied the *evangelical* name. And in order to sustain these false imputations, we have been accused of being the enemies of vital religion, and our doctrine has been subjected to every species of misrepresentation that the cunning and craft of our foes have been able to invent.

The task of defence is required at our hands. If the public are ever made acquainted with our faith, it will be through our own means. And though we have not the vanity to expect, nor any reason to hope, that every body will be eager to read what we write, we do believe that every effort that we make to explain our doctrine is attended with desirable results. Some few are thus enlightened by every succeeding effort, while a still greater number are made to think more favorably of that "sect which every where is spoken against." We feel obliged to be patient and persevering. But while we "bear all things," we feel encouraged to "hope all things." Though false charges against us are repeated after they have been triumphantly refuted, we are willing to travel over the same ground again. And, with the blessing of God, we shall continue our exertions until all wrong impressions are corrected, and the truth of the living God is known and enjoyed in its fulness.

UNIVERSALIST BELIEF.

CHAPTER I.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.

The foundation of all religious truth is *the existence of God.* This fundamental principle of reason and of revelation supports the entire superstructure of *Universalist belief.* And though some of our dishonorable opponents have endeavored to persuade the world that we are thorough skeptics, we have never supposed that they themselves consider this imputation honest and just. They *know*, if indeed they know any thing of our belief, that this charge is both false and malicious. And if we were to bring any such "railing accusation" against them, they would be justified in pronouncing us any thing but honest men and lovers of truth! But for the honor of humanity and religion, we trust that there are but few persons to be found who are base enough to give utterance to such wicked and diabolical

slander! Certainly no denomination under heaven would sanction such an outrage upon all that is worthy and of good report. We speak of the sin of a few individuals of "the baser sort"—of men whose conduct would be a reproach to "the father of lies," and who do despite to human nature! We have no patience with such men; and if they cannot be brought to some faint sense of common justice and honesty, they ought at least to be held up to the righteous indignation of every virtuous mind. We censure no man for his errors of faith. We ask none to believe our doctrine without sufficient evidence of its truth. But we have a right to demand of all, and especially of such as profess to be *religious* men, something like *honest* and fair dealing.

In view of the innumerable and irrefragable proofs every where discernible of the Creator's works, it would seem impossible that any sane mind should really deny the existence of that Almighty Power which is the source of life and the soul of the universe! In every department of nature we plainly behold the most evident marks of *design* and *contrivance*. And the common reason of man declares that wherever these marks are certainly found, there must have been a *designer and contriver*. No axiom of the

most simple and intelligible philosophy is more fully established and more entirely free from every possible cavil, than that no *effect* can in any case be produced independently of an adequate *cause*. We are well aware that this statement is not new; but though quite familiar to us all, its truth has never been invalidated either by the powers of sound reasoning or the arts of sophistry. And so clearly self-evident is this proposition, that no man endued with the faculties common to our race, could be persuaded to believe that a nicely-constructed machine, in which the evidences of skill and design are plainly and strongly exhibited, created itself and continues to operate by its own inherent powers. Any man, whatever might be his belief and peculiar habits of thought, upon beholding such a piece of mechanism, though he might know nothing of the mechanic, would be sure that the hand of a *workman* had there been exercised.

Now we would not harshly condemn the unfortunate skeptic; nor deny to him that honesty and sincerity of heart in the advocacy of his opinions, to which he may be justly entitled. Such railing may in some instances proceed from earnestness of spirit in the cause of truth; but it furnishes no argument, and is unworthy of any

man's notice. But we desire that the skeptic would reason concerning the works of God just as we all do in regard to the works of man; and wherever there are indisputable proofs of wisdom and power, candidly admit that there must have been a wise and powerful agent employed.

Is not this course sanctioned by *reason?* And who ever doubted that the works of Nature, from the smallest spire of grass that shoots from the earth, up to the vast worlds and systems of worlds that revolve in the immensity of space, exhibit the most striking and forcible proofs of *wisdom and design?* The simple fact is universally admitted; and if doubted, could be substantiated by an array of proof sufficient to convince every mind, capable of perceiving the force of an argument, and candid enough to acknowledge the convictions of the understanding.

Behold the perfect order and regularity with which the heavenly bodies perform their appointed revolutions; and see the wisdom displayed in all the arrangements and economy of nature, and in the careful adaptation of means to certain and benevolent ends. And what but Infinite Wisdom could have suspended the sun in the firmament to dispense light and heat to surrounding worlds —fixed the planets in their courses—marked out

the track of the comet—and set the whole machinery of the heavens in such perfect motion that one body never disturbs the movements of another, and even the time of a distant eclipse may be foretold by man? What but a *designing* hand could have placed every creature in that particular sphere of life for which its own peculiar nature is best suited—conferred the necessary powers, and furnished all the means and provisions for the support of life and the attainment of happiness? Who but a *skilful* workman could have constructed our bodies in all their fearful and wonderful mechanism, and endued us with all the senses and faculties that we possess? And in view of all these things, may we not well pause, and exclaim with pleasing wonder and joy, in the language of the devout Psalmist—"He that planted the ear, shall HE not hear? and he that formed the eye, shall HE not see?"

It may indeed be affirmed that all things were produced and are regulated and controlled by the *laws of nature.* But this assertion only provokes a question that demands attention. What is here meant by *nature?* Does it mean the *materials* of which the planets and the world are composed—the simple elementary principles of all things? If this be the meaning, the conclu-

sion unavoidably follows that *nature* is nothing more nor less than *matter*. And what are the *laws* of matter? Every man who has reflected on this subject will answer that one great and pervading law of matter is *inertia*, or the incapability of motion, until some power is applied to give it the force of action. And we think every skeptic will readily admit that life and motion are not original and independent qualities of inanimate matter, but will contend that they are the effect of organization.

The reader can now see the subject in a tangible form, and understand the bearings and force of the whole argument. Matter is *inert*, and life is the result of some particular combination of matter. The question now to be decided, is, what power brought matter into that state of organization necessary to constitute being, and inspired it with life and motion? For no such power is found in *un*organized matter; and surely none will be so perversely unreasonable as to suppose that mere matter could confer that which it never possessed! And if by some strange and fortunate freak of blind chance, matter should exert a power which it never possessed, and succeed in effecting an organization, it might be questioned whether *life* would be the necessary result.

But let us be accommodating, and even suppose that matter could confer life. Whence came beings possessing the faculties of thought, reason, will and memory? Are these the productions of an *unknowing*, *unthinking*, *unwilling* cause? The proposition is too manifestly absurd and opposed to every principle of reason and common sense to require refutation. And if, to avoid the difficulty, it be asserted that matter is *intelligent*, (which is certainly not true,) we have only to say that *intelligence* constitutes *being;* and an *intelligent Being* is the great First Cause in which we believe.

It is therefore plainly perceived that however remotely we may trace the causes of existing things, and whatever curious theories we may conceive, we must ultimately arrive at the conclusion, that there was before all things, an Intelligent life-giving Cause. The skill and design manifest in the works of creation, the order and harmony of the Universe, and the wise and perfect adaptation of one thing to another, and of means to ends, can be rationally and satisfactorily accounted for in no other way. This great Cause we call God—leaving others to denominate it what they please. If any choose to call it nature, or the laws of nature, we shall neither

dispute their right nor question their motives. And, indeed, we are inclined to believe that the whole controversy is rather about *words* than ideas: for it seems impossible for the mind to believe, notwithstanding "the *fool* hath said in his heart, there is no God," that any sane man is actually an ATHEIST!

CHAPTER II.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Both reason and Scripture declare that all creatures owe their existence to the same Supreme Power. And whatever explanations may be proposed in regard to the things that exist and happen in the world, the enquiring mind can never rest satisfied until the great truth is well understood that God governs all worlds and controls every event. The superficial thinker, with more reverence than reason, startles at the declaration that God is the Creator and Director of all things; and with feelings of profound awe, aims to vindicate the character of the Supreme Being, by utterly denying the universal extent of his Providence. But every such attempt is sure to result in conclusions alike dishonorable to God, and unsatisfactory to the sober mind that thinks deeply, and will receive no substitute for consistent truth. Has God created beings that he cannot, or will not govern according to the determinations of his own will? Can any event happen throughout

the vast extent of his unbounded empire, without his permission, and without his unerring knowledge of what shall be the consequence? Are there any limits to his watchful care and his unclouded vision? And, in the exercise of his unrivalled power, what can disturb the harmony of his works, or in the smallest degree baffle "the operation of his hands?" How pure soever may be the intentions of the man who denies the full and perfect providence of God over every event, such denial, if well considered, will be found to lead to conclusions that belong to the Atheist's creed! When once this *limitation* of God's superintending wisdom and power is sanctioned, no man can tell where it shall end!

The ancient Persians believed in the existence of two creative and governing powers; the one the source of all light and good, and the other the author of all darkness and evil. This doctrine was introduced into the Christian Church and blended with the religion of Christ, by one Cubricus, otherwise called Manes, in the third century—and seems still to be advocated by no inconsiderable portion of the Christian world. It may not be held in these days in the same form in which it used to exist; but the doctrine itself, though denied in name, still has a be-

ing in Christendom. And the belief very extensively prevails that there is in the universe a mighty being who is the author of all evil, whose kingdom is erected in opposition to that of the Almighty, and who will finally succeed in securing to himself a large portion of the offspring of God!

This doctrine is believed on the supposed ground that there is in the universe, absolute, ultimate evil, which never could have been created by a good Being. It is thought to be established by the very necessity of the case: For nothing could be more inconsistent or paradoxical than the supposition that real and endless evil should proceed from the very fountain of all goodness! The conclusion is undoubtedly correct; but the *premises* from which it is drawn find no support in reason and truth.

When we direct our attention to the Scriptures, we are taught that there is but one Creator; and that all things have proceeded from a common source. There is one Being in the universe whose existence is from eternity. He was before every other being and all events, and is the original Cause of all things.

"Ere the infant sun
Was rolled together, or had tried his beams
Athwart the gloom profound,"

He lived in the perfection of his nature, with no rival power to intercept the exercise of his omnipotence! The earth was moulded by his skill, inhabited by his power, and man inspired with life by the breath of his mouth! No other agent is named in the record of creation. GOD created, and He alone. *He* said, "Let there be light; and there was light." "*He* spake, and it was done; *He* commanded, and it stood fast."

And as to the existence of that which is supposed to have been produced by another and far different power, we find that its creation is ascribed to God. It is written, Isaiah xlv. 7, "*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things.*" The same Power that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, covers the earth with the mantle of night. And He that speaks peace to the troubled elements of nature, raises the whirlwind and the storm, and scatters the blight of mildew and death over the face of creation! He hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and transformed the murderous Saul into a messenger of glad tidings and peace. He blinded the eyes of Israel that they should not know the Messiah promised their fathers, and granted the light of the Gospel to the benighted Gentiles.

He caused the law to enter that transgression might abound, and that grace might much more abound, even unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. And he has concluded all men in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all!

Creative power belongs to God alone. And whatever exists or happens is caused either directly or remotely by him; or at least permitted by his wisdom for some good purpose. That the entire race of mankind have been produced by his omnific energies, none will attempt to deny. If one man could come into existence without his agency, all things might exist independently of his power. But all believe, because there is no room for any diversity of sentiment, that the Deity is "the God of the spirits of all flesh," and the Father of all men. We may, however, proceed still farther, and say that all things affecting the interests of man, are subject to the perfect and supreme control of God. And this fact, although many pretend to deny it, necessarily results from the supposition that evil is caused by beings whom God has created!

We would not be understood to affirm that God is the direct or *immediate* cause of any of the apparent disorders of the world; but merely that all things, when traced through seconda-

ry causes up to their first origin, will be found to proceed from Him. And what say the Scriptures? "*Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?*" Amos iii. 6. No *evil* proceeds directly from God, who is the source and perfection of goodness. But he permits evils to exist in the world, not that an ultimate injury may thereby be inflicted upon a portion of his creatures, and the harmony of his works forever destroyed; but for the accomplishment of such ends as shall be compatible with his own nature, character and government. And we ask, if this view of the subject does not reflect greater honor upon the character of the Divinity, than that which supposes that evil exists in opposition to the divine intentions, and will finally be the means of destroying the harmony of his works, and of *defeating* his righteous and benevolent purposes? The reader is particularly desired candidly and seriously to *ponder* this question.

In whatever difficulties the subject may be involved, we cannot believe that creative energy belongs to any other than God; or that the smallest thing can be effected without the aid of power *at first* derived from him. And in the full persuasion that such is the doctrine of the

Scriptures, we hold it as a *truth*, demanding belief and worthy of God!

The same Power that created all beings and set in motion the operations of universal nature, governs with the hand of a Sovereign every creature and every event. Nothing can live and move without his aid. He upholds, sustains, and directs all things. And though clouds and darkness are round about him, and his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out, we are assured in his word that he "*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*" His will is *done*, as well among the inhabitants of the earth, as in the armies of heaven.

> "The general order since the world began,
> Is kept in nature, *and is kept in man.*"

We admit that there are many things in the divine economy above human comprehension. We behold evils and sufferings in the world without being able to perceive that any good can ever result from their existence. And how shall the mind obtain satisfaction in reference to such subjects? Consider first what may be known of God's ways from the visible operations of his hands. In the natural world we see

the atmosphere purified and rendered salubrious, by the same thunder and lightning that leave in their train destruction and death. The water that destroys the property and the lives of men, enriches the earth, and causes it to bring forth seed to the sower and bread to the eater. And even in the moral world we have seen evils effect their own cures, and be the means of lasting good. The calamities of war have heightened the blessings of peace; and nations and individuals have been taught the necessity of moderation by the evils of excess.

A slight knowledge of God's works and ways will show that he has constituted all creatures for enjoyment. The impress of benevolence is discernible in every thing that he has made. And when we see the innocent babe, "born only to weep and die," knowing nothing of the world save its sufferings, and closing its eyes in sorrow, and we are unable here to recognise the hand of a kind and benignant Being, we should judge of God's ways from what we know. Our attention should be turned to the Scriptures to ascertain upon what *principles* his government is administered, and what are the *purposes* of his will in reference to mankind. We find it there declared that God is *good* to all his creatures;

and that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in us.

> "Here then we rest; the universal cause
> Acts to *one end*, but acts by *various laws*."

If we had lived in the days of Jacob, and witnessed his afflictions in the loss of Joseph, we should have been unable to reconcile such an event with the universal and changeless benevolence of the overruling Power. We should have supposed, either that the hand of God was not in the affair, or else that he was indifferent to the happiness of his creatures. But when we look to the sequel of the history, we find that the very evils which appeared so great, were the means of accomplishing the greatest good. The slavery of Joseph in Egypt, enabled him to preserve his father and family alive, and to perpetuate the tribe from which came "the Savior of the world."

If we had witnessed the rejection and death of Jesus, we might have supposed, as did the disciples, that his religion was destroyed, and his kingdom forever abolished. And yet we now learn from the Scriptures, that the death of our Master was the great means of establishing his religion, and of giving permanency to his

kingdom on earth. His enemies, who were blinded, unwittingly fulfilled the Scriptures, and were instruments in the hands of God in proving that Jesus was the Messiah promised their fathers.

And if we had seen the rejection of Israel and the call of the Gentiles, we might have thought that God had cast away his people. But Paul has assured us, Romans xi, that the casting away of the Jews is the enriching of the world, and that the receiving of them shall be life from the dead. He has explained the great mystery, and shown that the blindness of Israel is only partial, and that they shall all be saved, together with the fulness of the Gentiles. Well then might he exclaim with pleasing wonder and joy, "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Though sin and wickedness abound in the world, and men are punished for their transgressions, God is ever carrying forward his wise and benevolent designs. Every thing is subject to his supreme control, and subservient to the accomplishment of his holy will. He can say to the angry passions of the human soul, as

to the raging billows of the mighty deep, Hitherto shall ye come, but no farther! He has "declared the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And though his judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out, in His all-comprehensive view every thing is tending to the final execution of his plans, and the eventual blessedness in Christ Jesus of the whole race of Adam!

"All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, *direction*, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good."

CHAPTER III.

REASONS OF BELIEF.

The Apostle Paul has said, 2d Cor. iv. 13, "We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak." The passage of ancient scripture to which Paul here refers, is found in the 116th Psalm. Believing that the Lord was gracious, righteous and merciful, David gave expression to the feelings of his heart, and openly declared his hope and confidence in the God of salvation. And having the same spirit of faith, and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ with all the heart, Paul honestly and faithfully declared to the world the grounds and reasons of his belief.

In the conduct of this eminent servant of God we find an example well worthy of imitation. In whatever fanciful theories we may indulge—whatever may be our mere speculations in regard to things of a sacred nature, nothing deserves to be dignified with the name of *belief*, unless some foundation can be shown and some reason offered for its support. And, when, from careful

study in a right spirit, any faith toward God has been obtained, that faith should be expressed to others. "I believed, and *therefore* have I spoken; we also believe, and *therefore* speak."

Belief is not mere conjecture: nor is it positive knowledge. It is the persuasion or conviction of the understanding that some unknown thing is true; and it must result from the force of evidence, either real or imaginary. The greatest falsehood may be firmly believed; but in such a case there is some supposed reason sufficient to induce belief in the mind. And a good understanding of that reason would remove the delusion, and discover the cheat. But when a conjecture is formed without any exercise of the reasoning powers of the mind; and is thought to be true, though no ground whatever can be assigned for its support, all this comes short of *belief*, and is sheer imagination. Perhaps many persons deceive themselves by cherishing mere speculations as their strongest faith and their dearest hopes. They may fancy that this thing is true, and that the other will hereafter be revealed, when at the same time they can assign no reason *why* they thus think. It is a mistake to suppose that any such ideal creations are *belief*. And we fear that such things are too

common among Christian people of the present day. There is a fearful tendency among religious teachers to demand belief, without producing sufficient evidence to convince the candid thinker that the thing to be believed is true. And when a doctrine is embraced without being understood, through fear of incurring the supposed consequences of not embracing it, *belief* is excluded, though the imagination is terrified.

In speaking of Christian belief, Paul said, "Now *faith* is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* ['ground, or, confidence,' in the marginal reading,] of things not seen." The man in whom the spirit of this faith dwells can inform you what he hopes for; and he can also furnish you with the *evidences* upon which his belief is founded. He is uninfluenced by any considerations of good policy—he has received the mere opinion of no man as the basis of his faith and hopes—he *thinks* he believes nothing for which he can offer no reason, in the expectation of thus securing the interests of his soul—but his mind has felt the weight of *evidence*, and FAITH is the result. He may possess but small gifts, and his tongue be unused to "set speech," but he knows in whom he has trusted, and he can show you the grounds of his confidence.

And though he has not actual knowledge of all things involving his interests, he "walks by *faith*, and not by sight," knowing in whom he has trusted, and feeling well assured that his hopes are built upon the precious foundation-stone laid in Zion! Such is faith, resting upon evidence; and the believer is required to *speak* and make known the *reasons* of his belief.

The Scriptures require no man to believe any thing, of the truth of which he can find no evidence. They demand no implicit faith; but instruct us to be always ready to give a *reason* of the hope that we cherish. The Psalmist did more than to call upon men to see the Divine goodness—he invited them to *taste* and *see* that the Lord is good, to learn the fact from a knowledge of his works and ways. Nay, the Divine word cautions us against believing every spirit, and commands us to try the spirits whether they are of God. And Jehovah himself said to the children of Israel, "Come, now, and let us *reason* together." From all these instructions, our duty in regard to matters of belief is perfectly plain. We must think, reason, compare and judge for ourselves, and not for one another, being accountable to God alone. No man or body of men has any right to prescribe to us what we

shall believe, or to call us to account for our faith. Belief is a personal thing; and even God requires of us no more than to avail ourselves of all the means within our reach, to make the best possible use of our powers, and to believe that which comes from sincere and honest inquiry, and is the result of evidence. And having thus believed, the example of inspired men calls upon us to *speak*.

In imitation of this example, we have undertaken to state *the grounds and reasons of our faith*—to show *what* we believe, and *why* we believe. The subject before us presents a wide field of labor, and we have no expectation of fully exploring it in all its parts. Although the substance of our faith and the foundation that supports it, may be stated in a few words, the theme is vast and boundless, and might be contemplated forever, while new beauties would be constantly unfolded to the mind. The riches of Christ are unsearchable, and the love of God passeth all understanding. And the glories of redemption, into which angels desired to look, could hardly be set forth in all their brightness by the feeble powers of man. But there is much of interest within our reach, and we hope to be able to show by reason and scripture that the

doctrine of Universal Salvation, though despised and rejected of men, as was "the Savior of the world," is worthy of all acceptation.

We solemnly believe that the views which we hold of the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, are not only the most honorable to him and the most compatible with his works and word; but also the best calculated of any that have ever been entertained, to save men both from the evils of fanaticism and from the deleterious influence of Infidelity. We wish not to cast reproach upon our fellow-christians who believe doctrines that we abhor; nor do we seek to exalt ourselves in knowledge and usefulness above the faithful and devoted teachers whom we believe to be in great error. But we simply state the deliberate conviction of our mind, and thus incidentally present a very important *reason* for the labor in which we are now engaged.

The late Dr. Emmons, who has quite recently been called to sleep with his fathers, says, in his Appendix to Edwards against Chauncey, "There is a larger number than these, [thorough skeptics,] perhaps, who are making swift and bold advances in the cause of Infidelity, and leave no methods unemployed to discredit divine Revelation, and subvert the foundations of Chris-

tianity. They need not tell the world their motives. Were they not convinced that the Bible contains *the doctrine of eternal punishments*, they would not rack their invention to find arguments to persuade themselves and others, that the Scriptures are a cunningly devised fable. Let *this* doctrine be erased from the Bible, and every Deist would become its votary, and exchange his Bolingbroke, Voltaire, or Chesterfield, for that sacred volume. *It is this doctrine alone that compels them to renounce a book*, which bears so many signatures of divinity, and which they are constrained to acknowledge contains the most excellent institutions, instructions and commands. But *so weak is their infidelity*, we presume they would rejoice to find the Bible on their side, to confirm their wavering hopes and feeble prospects of future happiness. And this is what the scheme of universal salvation promises. It flatters them that *the Bible is their friend*, and announces eternal felicity to them and to all mankind. Accordingly, it is well known, that numbers of a deistical turn have become converts to this agreeable doctrine, and many others are imminently exposed to fall into the fatal snare. But this is flying from the iron weapon, and rushing on the bow of steel. For if any discard

the Bible because they know that it does contain the doctrine of future and eternal punishments, or embrace it because they imagine that it does not contain that doctrine, they will infallibly meet with disappointment and ruin in the end."

These concessions of an eminent theologian and distinguished opposer of our faith, contain truths that ought to be generally known among Christian people. *It is the doctrine of endless misery alone that compels men* to renounce a book, which they are constrained to acknowledge contains the most excellent institutions and instructions, and which they would eagerly embrace and believe, if they could only feel well persuaded that it gives no support to that doctrine and its concomitant cruelties and absurdities! The scheme of universal salvation aims to convince them "that the Bible is their friend" and the friend of all mankind—that it proclaims "*good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people*"—and that if they were brought to believe its messages of salvation, they would thus "confirm their wavering hopes and feeble prospects of future happiness," and be enabled to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Why should we preach a doctrine that *compels* men to reject that which they feel constrained

to acknowledge is excellent and good; and which they would cherish with warm and grateful hearts, if this chief and only obstacle were removed from their minds? And why should we be censured by any lover of Christian truth and righteousness, for laboring to deliver men from the only influence that binds them to Infidelity, and to bring them into the happy belief that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth?" If we can induce "numbers of a deistical turn" to believe that Jesus Christ is "the Savior of the world," and thus be the means of subduing their opposition and enlisting their souls in the cause of the Gospel, we shall accomplish a good work; and we ought to receive the thanks, and not the reproaches of good men.

We cannot believe that God has revealed any doctrine, the knowledge of which forms the only barrier to belief in minds that feel constrained to acknowledge that his revelation "contains the most excellent institutions, instructions, and commands." That the doctrine of endless misery produces this unhappy effect, is freely admitted both by the friends and the opposers of that doctrine. It is so utterly repugnant to every good feeling that God has implanted within

us, that few ever embrace it from candid investigation and reasonable conviction. Many are made to believe it from the mere force of early and deep-rooted prejudices and the continued influence of education; while others embrace it under the power of fear, and in the hope of escaping dreadful evils and of securing the greatest blessings. But when reason is freely called into requisition, and the best feelings of humanity are allowed to exert their proper influence over the mind, the supposition that the Scriptures countenance the awful doctrine of unending torments, will lead to a rejection of the whole counsel of God! And "it is this doctrine alone that *compels* men to renounce a book, which bears so many signatures of divinity, and which they are constrained to acknowledge contains the most excellent institutions, instructions, and commands."

We desire, with the help of God, to take away this fatal stumbling-block—this dangerous rock of offence, upon which so many have made shipwreck of their faith in Christ and their best hopes of immortality. Having received the spirit of that faith which is friendly to all men, and embraces the final holiness and happiness of all, we *speak* in behalf of our suffering race,

And while we endeavor to guard our fellows against the blinding influence of false preconceptions, and all conjectural and groundless alarms; we would also strive to save them from the miserable effects of skepticism, and to remove the very *cause* of their infidelity. Both the believer in endless misery and the skeptic must experience painful doubts in regard to the future state of existence. The former cannot feel assured beyond every misgiving that he will be in the right frame of mind to ascend to celestial bliss just when "the silver cord" of life is loosed from its hold, and the spirit is called to depart; and he cannot with confidence promise himself what fate may await him beyond the veil of death. All is *uncertainty;* and the mind, if it seriously reflect, is constantly wavering between hope and fear. And of the latter, it has well been said, "In vain does the unbeliever soothe his soul with the prospect of an eternal sleep; for by what argument can he prove that we will not live by chance in eternity, as certainly as we have lived by chance in time? And whether our future state will chance to be a heaven or a hell, no atheist is able to inform us. If it be a heaven, no thanks to any intelligent author; and if a hell, no hope from any parental guar-

dian or friend, to save us from its horrors. On this dreadful uncertainty, what considerate man would not lament that he ever opened his eyes upon the light, or ever breathed the vitality of the atmosphere?"*

"We have a more *sure* word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." We can pray "for all men," which "is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"—"lifting up holy hands, *without wrath and doubting*." And if we can be the means of imparting this blessed and glorious faith to any unbelieving mind, or to any fearful soul, we shall add to the sum of human happiness, and in some small degree advance the interests of our Savior's kingdom on earth.

* Rev. Asa Shinn.

CHAPTER IV.

INSPIRATION AND TRUTH OF THE BIBLE.

Rejecting all the creeds that have ever been established by human authority, we make the Bible itself the basis of our faith and hopes. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation from God of the whole duty and final destiny of all mankind. They come to us not as mere histories, informing us of people that lived, and of things that happened in other days; but as genuine and authentic records, dictated by the spirit of the Living God. The sacred writers were but men of like passions with ourselves; but they received "the inspiration of the Almighty," and were gifted with extraordinary powers. And the communications which they made to the world were never conceived of by the unaided faculties of the human mind. While they performed works far above the abilities of all other men, they looked through the vista of distant ages, and made known future events. And the prophecies which the ancient Seers of God proclaimed to their fellows, were long afterwards verified beyond the cavil even of enemies.

Without attempting any thing like a full proof of the divine inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, we think it impossible for any candid and discerning man to read the predictions of the Old Testament in regard to cities, countries and people, and especially as they relate to the Jews, and then attentively consider their remarkable fulfilment, without being thoroughly and perfectly convinced that the spirit of the All-seeing God was the spirit of prophecy in the hearts of "holy men of old." These predictions were not seemingly verified in an occasional coincidence; but fulfilled to the very letter in numberless instances; and monuments of the fact are yet visible to all. Look at Babylon, Idumea, Jerusalem, the natural descendants of Abraham—any city, country or people, of which the Scriptures prophesied, and you will perceive that if the prophets spoke at random, their predictions present the greatest mystery that ever puzzled the mind, or gained the belief of a thinking being. If they spoke by chance, well may we say with Pope,

"All chance, *direction* which thou canst not see."

The ancient prophecies relating to the Messiah are still more remarkable. No such personage had ever appeared in the world—none like him has ever since been known among men.

But the time of his coming, his character, offices, labors and death were all accurately foretold long before the day of his advent. The predictions of the Scriptures had excited general and almost universal expectations of his appearance on earth, at the very time when angels from heaven announced his nativity. John the Baptist was at first thought by the Jews to be the Messiah that had been promised; and he found it necessary to certify them distinctly that he was "not the Christ." And what gives peculiar force and weight to the authority of divine prophecy in this case, is the fact that the Jews were disappointed in the character of our Savior; and by opposing and putting him to death, they unwittingly fulfilled all that the prophets had spoken. There was no collusion between Jews and Christians to palm a deception upon the world; but one party strove to uphold the old religion, while the other stood forth in the midst of dangers and death to defend the new and better covenant of promise. And while the former fiercely opposed all the claims of our Lord to the Messiahship, the latter clearly proved by ancient writings that were in the hands of the Jews, that Jesus was indeed the Christ!

The inspiration and truth of the Old Testament are established by a long chain of both internal and external proofs, while the claims of the New are now attested by additional evidence. The *effects* of the Gospel which we see and feel all around us, bear convincing testimony, not only to its truth, but also to its exceeding and unspeakable value. It is the source of our best knowledge, and the fountain of our purest happiness. It contains the secret power of every real improvement in society; and every enlightened nation now on earth has been instructed and elevated by the moral influence of Christianity. This religion has fashioned the laws and moulded the institutions that give us a high and noble rank among the inhabitants of the world. And wherever its power is really felt, man is raised up from his degradation, and renewed in the spirit of knowledge after the image of him that created him. But to attempt to prove the truth of Christianity in a Christian community would be a needless work. Its works sufficiently bear it witness. And the man who will deny the works would hardly be profited by reason and argument.

We know that there are men in the world surrounded by the blessings of revealed religion,

who "rack their invention to find arguments to persuade themselves and others, that the Scriptures are a cunningly devised fable." But we are well convinced that their opposition to the teachings of divine wisdom, and their ingratitude to God for his richest favors, are, in most cases at least, the results of very superficial thinking, if not of vain conceit and wilful perversity! The common objections to the Bible have all been repeatedly and most triumphantly answered; but as in another case that might be named, they are still reiterated with as much confidence and boldness, as if nothing approaching an answer could possibly be furnished. Let any man of good sense read Watson's Reply to Paine with candor; and he will be astonished to witness the weakness and perversity, the effrontery and daring falsehood, which every where abound in that mischievous work, called by a strange abuse of language, "The Age of Reason." And yet the beggarly and mendacious assumptions of this book are flippantly quoted to disprove the Bible, by persons who are almost as ignorant of what the Scriptures contain as they are of the Persian Zendavesta! An apparent contradiction is referred to, and declared sufficient to condemn the whole Bible, when at the same

time a little modest study would show that the whole difficulty has originated in sheer misunderstanding. Or a command of God is pronounced arbitrary and unjust, when its meaning is neither known nor sought. Or a prophetic vision, highly embellished with poetic imagery, is declared to be all nonsense, by some shallow-minded person who has never taken the pains to acquaint himself with what it does actually signify. And so of many other supposed objections to divine truth.

But all such cavils are very small matters; and they are hardly worthy to be taken into account in deciding the great question whether we have any ground of confidence in the God who made us, or whether all our hopes are the mere delusions of superstitious weakness. What if two sentences snatched from different parts of the Bible, seem not to express the same meaning to the very letter, shall we therefore abandon our trust in Heaven, give our joyous faith to the winds, count the blood of the cross an unclean thing, and do despite to the spirit of divine grace? Let us but know that "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath

in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," and we care nothing for the poor quibbles and empty cavils of men wise in their own conceit. The strong holds of our defence will be unharmed by any assault of the foe; and the mightiest weapon that can be hurled at our citadel, will either fall harmless at its base, or return with increased force upon the head of the foolish assailant!

If all the supposed discrepancies found in the Bible were real and unanswerable, that sacred volume would still stand a lasting monument of the wisdom, power, and beneficence of God. The great and fundamental truths which it contains would still be abundantly attested; and it would still reasonably claim the hearty belief, aye, the strongest love and the highest admiration of every human soul. But these little things can all be explained consistently with reason and truth, and to the full satisfaction of every mind that is capable and candid enough to perceive the force of reason and the evidence of truth. And it should be understood that Infidels do not attack the main bulwarks of Christian truth, and enter the castle to take it by storm. They commonly throw small missiles,

and seem to take delight in annoying, while they shudder to attempt the work of complete and thorough destruction. The standard works in defence of the Bible are not manfully attacked, and their arguments one after another fairly examined and exploded. But the enemy is wont to hang about the outskirts of the camp, to make a display of his prowess in capturing some unguarded victim. And perhaps the reason of all this small kind of warfare is found in the fact that none can entirely divest themselves of the impression that God has in some degree revealed himself to man in the holy Scriptures.

CHAPTER V.

CAUSES OF SKEPTICAL OBJECTIONS.

The principal objections of skeptics are seldom, if ever, directed against doctrines that are really taught in the word of God. They suppose the Bible to contain the doctrines of total depravity, the Trinity, a vicarious atonement, an almost omnipotent personal devil, and an endless hell. They cannot believe that man is naturally and thoroughly corrupt in all his feelings, affections and powers. They know from experience and observation, and from every source whence they can obtain knowledge, that this doctrine is as false as it is dishonorable to God and degrading to man. Both reason and feeling are shocked at the thought that God would create, or suffer his works to be disgraced by a mere mass of living pollution; and they turn with loathing and disgust from a book which they have been taught to believe contains this abominable notion. For the mere act of rejecting such a doctrine they deserve no censure; for nothing could more shamefully outrage all

religion and humanity, than the notion that the noblest work of God on earth, and the only mortal creature that bears his image, is the only utterly vile and worthless thing in his whole creation! But if they would only free their minds from all wrong prejudices, make the proper and necessary distinction between human creeds and divine truth, and learn what the Bible says on this subject, one great cause of their infidelity would soon be removed, and they would find themselves prepared to make farther advances in the truth.

They cannot believe that three distinct persons, each perfect and entire in himself constitute but one being; nor can they possibly understand how a *son* can be of exactly the same age with his *father*. The supposition, though not like the foregoing, utterly abhorrent to every good feeling, is equally opposed to every dictate of that reason which God has bestowed upon his creature man. *Three* mean more than *one*, and one less than three, the world over; and on any other than a religious subject, every man who has any thing like common understanding will admit that the *father* must exist before his *son*. But a correct knowledge of the divine

record would lead no man into the belief of any such manifest contradiction and absurdity. It teaches that "there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." 1 Cor. viii. 6. And it requires us to believe no doctrine that stands opposed to all that was ever thought to be reason, and which, however sincerely believed, no man can suppose that he ever understood!

They cannot see the justice of punishing the innocent for the sins of the guilty—of visiting fierce wrath and vengeance upon one who never sinned, and in whose mouth there was no guile, to satisfy legal demands upon transgressors. Such procedure is altogether incompatible with our natural sense of right and wrong, and would be condemned in man as the very climax of injustice and wanton cruelty. This notion formed one of the chief objections of Paine to the truth of the Bible and its moral influence in the world. He could see neither justice nor good example in visiting the inflictions of a broken law upon the unoffending, instead of the guilty. Yet the Scriptures declare God to be *just*, and command us to be his *imitators*. All this seems as con-

tradictory as it is unlovely. And with such a confusion of ideas in the mind, it is no marvel that some men should rashly condemn what they conceive to be the source of such a doctrine. But here, again, the want of discrimination is apparent; and creeds and the Bible are again found at issue. The scriptures declare that God "will by no means clear the guilty;" and though they speak of Christ's *sufferings for* us, i. e. *in our behalf*, they nowhere say that he was ever *punished* in onr stead, or that he ever *suffered in our stead.* And a good understanding of just what the Bible does teach on this subject, would overcome and bear away another objection that has long hindered men from believing what God has spoken by the prophets and by his Son.

Skeptics also rear an objection of no inconsiderable importance upon the mistaken notion that the Bible speaks of a most powerful evil being, who disputes with the Almighty the government of the world, and who will finally leave the contest with very great spoils, and reign eternally in his kingdom over untold myriads of subjects. The question will arise in the mind, as it did with Crusoe's man Friday,

why will the Omnipotent Jehovah endlessly preserve in existence this arch-enemy of all that is good? "*Why not kill him?*" If God really *wills* to bless all men in Christ, why not remove this only hindrance to so great and good a work? But the Bible gives us no information of any Devil, but such as we find in the carnal mind, and in wicked adversaries of truth and righteousness. And if skeptics would rightly inform themselves on this subject, they would very readily perceive that their objection is based in entire mistake, and is consequently of no force.

All skeptics, so far as we have been able to ascertain their views, suppose the Bible to teach the doctrine of endless misery; and on this ground they reject it. "It is this doctrine alone (says Dr. Emmons) that *compels* them to renounce a book, which bears so many signatures of divinity, and which they are constrained to acknowledge contains the most excellent institutions, instructions and commands." And who can deny that there is something inexpressibly awful and abhorrent to the purest and best feelings of every man, in the thought that the Father of mercies and the God of all grace will

curse a part of his offspring with all imaginable tortures, throughout the ceaseless duration of eternity? And when such is declared to be the doctrine of that Book which proclaims "*good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all people,*" who can blame a man for pausing to inquire before he believes? Alas! how many have been driven headlong into the vortex of Infidelity by that which "*compels them to renounce*" the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the world! How many have turned away from the Bible, because they supposed it to contain a doctrine unsurpassed in cruelty by any thing ever conceived by pagan superstition or savage ferocity! But if they had learned that the Bible is their friend, and announces eternal felicity to them and to all mankind," they would have embraced it with zeal and loved it with ardent devotion.

Thus we find that the chief objections to the word of God result from the belief that it teaches certain doctrines of human creeds, to which in fact it gives no support whatever. This consideration should strengthen our faith in the Scriptures; and also increase our zeal in the work of convincing mankind what God has spoken, and what he requires us to believe. The Bible

should be diligently studied in perfect freedom from all restraints imposed by human means and authority. And if thus studied, with the aid of every useful help that can be obtained, it will make the mind wise unto salvation, and fill the soul with peace and joy!

One more consideration will bring us to the close of the present chapter: We should believe no doctrine that cannot be expressed in the language of the Bible. It may well be concluded that God intended his word to be understood according to the language in which that word has been spoken to man. Figures and parables should be interpreted in accordance with the known usage of language, and in the light of clear and unambiguous testimony. But every essential item of Christian faith should be found expressed in words so plain and easily understood, that the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein. And such is indeed the case. Who can fail to comprehend such declarations as the following?—"The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works."—"There is but one God."—"God is love."—He "will by no means clear the guilty."—He "will have all men to be saved."—He is the "God and Father of all."—"The living God, who is the Savior of all men."

Such language expresses truths involving the highest interests of man in time and in eternity; and it is commended by its very simplicity to the comprehension of every man. But the reader will find that the doctrines which compel men to reject the Bible against their own feelings and convictions of its excellency and worth, though very plainly stated in the creeds of human devise, were never expressed in Scripture language. The Trinity, vicarious atonement, total depravity, substituted righteousness and sin, future judgment, and endless misery, are phrases that have never yet been found in Scripture; nor have we been able to find any thing of a similar meaning. Such things, therefore, should all be laid aside; while the Divine Record is made the great standard and the only standard of our faith.

Let all our inquiries be thus governed—let us cultivate a fondness for the study of divine truth —let us habituate the mind to frequent and constant communion with God—and while we diligently avail ourselves of every means of instruction which the Lord has afforded, let us humbly and devoutly pray that his Holy Spirit will en lighten our minds and guide us into all truth.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Much as Christians of various denominations disagree in their respective systems of faith, there is a remarkable concurrence of belief among all in regard to the essential attributes of the Godhead. All believe that our Maker is a being of infinite wisdom, almighty power, and perfect and unbounded benevolence. These three attributes plainly comprise all that belong to the Divinity. And justice and mercy, holiness and truth are but varied manifestations of the same common nature. No conflicting principles abide in God—no opposing qualities emanate from Him. And if it be proper to distinguish between his several attributes, it may well be said, And now abideth wisdom, power and goodness, these three; but the greatest of these is *goodness*. None deny that God possesses every excellency of character in the greatest possible perfection; and all admit that if any attribute of

the divine nature may properly be distinguished above all the rest, that attribute is benevolence. Whether we direct our inquiries to the works and ways, or to the word of God, we everywhere behold the most striking and convincing manifestations of goodness. Every theological writer, of whatever belief, and upon whatever subject he may bestow his labors, is constrained to acknowledge that the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord; and that wherever the wisdom and power of Jehovah are displayed, there are certain proofs of perfect and changeless benevolence.

The great fundamental principles of all religious truth are freely recognized by all professing Christians; and our diversities of belief are found in the different conclusions which we draw from the same general premises. While all believe that God is infinitely wise, powerful and good, and perhaps also agree with respect to the designs and intentions of his will, the slightest progress of mind from first principles is marked by contrariety of faith. And the fact seems strange and almost unaccountable, that in starting from the same point and in reasoning from the same acknowledged principles, we arrive at not only different, but directly opposite

results. One is led to believe in the final destruction of all sin and suffering, while another holds that these enemies of God and man will be immortalized and continue to exist so long as eternity shall endure. Surely, one or the other must "greatly err." And it cannot be considered a matter of indifference with any thinking being whether we know on which side the truth is found, or not. The subject relates to the highest interests of the soul. And the individual who realizes no concern of mind in regard to the ultimate destination of the human race is unworthy the name of a man. On this subject every thought and feeling of the mind should be actively and earnestly engaged; and the inquiry should be steadily and faithfully pursued, until every cloud is dispersed and every doubt removed, and the soul enters fully into rest in believing the whole truth of God. And although we claim no infallibility, we cannot doubt that God has placed within our reach the means of ascertaining to our perfect satisfaction what shall be the final destiny of the human family. The whole plan of the divine economy may not be understood—the unsearchable judgments of God may not be fathomed by the feeble powers of man—the times and seasons which

the Father hath put in his own power may not be known to the dwellers on earth—and we may not clearly perceive all the means and instrumentalities by which the world shall be reconciled unto God and blessed in Christ Jesus. But from a good understanding of the nature and attributes of the Lord, and with the powerful aids derived from the clear light of revelation, we may ascertain the purposes of our Maker, and learn the great *end* for which we were spoken into being.

Is the subject of religion dark and abstruse above all others, that men think and believe so differently on this subject? We cannot sanction such a notion. And we are well persuaded that such wide and essential differences of faith would be overcome and removed, if men would only reason as logically from cause to effect and from proposition to conclusion on religious subjects, as in matters of less importance. The true reason of such unreasonable diversities of belief must be sought in the preponderating force of religious feeling, and in the almost invincible power of prejudice in sacred things; and not in the nature of the subject itself. Because religion is so pre-eminently important to

man, and feeling and desire are more strong and active than reason and judgment on this subject, the mind is here less susceptible to the convictions of truth, than in reference to any other matter that invites investigation and claims belief. Liability to mistake is a common weakness of our race; and error here seems to take the strongest hold, and is the least willing to yield to the persuasions of reason and the evidence of truth. On this subject, the best gift of God to man, even reason, has been denied its appropriate work, the voice of humanity has been silenced, and every generous emotion of the soul has been stifled by the influence of fear and the arbitrary power of prejudice. And men of deep and vigorous intellect and the most clear and penetrating minds in most respects, have been so completely fettered in erroneous prepossessions on this subject, as to sanction and adopt a process of reasoning, that would meet their severest reprehension and even excite their ridicule in any matter of philosophical truth.

It is painful to reflect upon the fact that men of high standing and great influence in society, avowedly support doctrines which they have never examined, and which they could not be-

lieve if they were fully to investigate their claims to belief. They have been drawn into particular churches by various influences—some by education and early associations, but more perhaps through the desire to be considered fashionable; and they seem not to care what is preached or what is believed. "A theological system," says Dr. Jortin, "is too often no more than a temple consecrated to implicit faith; and he who enters in there to worship, instead of leaving his shoes, after the eastern manner, must leave his understanding at the door; and it will be well if he find it when he comes out again." Who that thinks deeply and reasons well, can actually believe that a God of infinite wisdom, power and benevolence, has ever formed a scheme involving infinitely unhappy consequences, or a benevolent plan that will ultimately fail of success? And yet men of capacious powers of mind and large benevolence of heart, are found in Churches where it is preached and believed that God, with all his benevolence to prompt, his wisdom to plan, and his power to execute, will at last suffer a large portion of his offspring to groan in ceaseless and endless woe! When we meet such persons on their way to

places of worship, we cannot suppress the inquiry, Have they ever fully examined the inconsistent and merciless doctrines they hear preached, and do they believe what they hear? The silent answer within, is, they leave *something* at the door of the temple before they enter, and that something they are careful to carry with them in every other place!

The impression widely obtains, not only among the meanly educated and illiterate, but also among such as ought to know better and are "without excuse," that the powers of the human mind should not be as freely exercised, and with the same determination to follow the truth wherever it may lead, in matters of a religious nature, as on other subjects of inquiry. The sacredness and importance of the subject are made to inspire a kind of superstitious awe; and the mind fears to investigate. The policy of spiritual leaders in other days has been marked by studied efforts to trammel the minds of men, and thus render them subservient to their own selfish schemes and wishes. And we fear that the same policy, though perhaps dictated by better feelings and directed to more worthy ends, still has its practical advocates and supporters. Investigation is crushed by the overpowering desire to sustain a

favorite dogma and preserve the public morals from the contaminations of error. There is entirely too much constraint in canvassing the evidences of religious *truth*, and too little willingness to follow its directions wherever it may lead, and whatever may be the consequences. Our minds should be utterly divested of every such weak and unmanly feeling; and every other consideration should be completely absorbed in this one all-important inquiry, *What is truth?* The truth is always safe; and we have nothing to fear from a knowledge of any thing that God has ever revealed.

Among such as diligently seek to understand the truth of God, one great source of error is found in the manner in which many commence the labor. Instead of first acquainting themselves with the great fundamental principles of truth, as set forth in the Scriptures, and freely acknowledged by all reasonable beings, and tracing them out in the light of reason and of revelation, to their legitimate results, they begin in the middle of the subject, and most zealously labor to build up the superstructure, without stopping to examine the foundation. And some Christian ministers seek to operate upon the

people, as a teacher would upon his scholars, if he should attempt to instruct them in the higher branches of education, before he has taught them the alphabet! They commence their efforts by urging men to the important duty of repentance; but it seems not to occur to their minds that a man must have some *knowledge* of the Being against whom he has sinned, before he can understandingly exercise repentance toward God. Even children are taught that they are sinners before God, and in danger of losing their immortal souls, before they have ever studied the simplest rudiments of religion—before they know any thing of the nature of the soul or of the Being that created it! And some persons commence, they know not where, and advance as rapidly as soon to imagine themselves fully acquainted with the great consummation of God's moral government, and the final destiny of the human race; when at the same time they have scarcely bestowed a single thought upon the acknowledged *foundation* of all religious truth! Such being the case, and considering the unyielding tenacity with which most men cling to their opinions and prejudices, we need no longer marvel that the grossest errors in theology are

embraced and advocated by those whose heads are clear, and whose minds are discerning and penetrating on every other subject.

But to return. There are, as we have already stated, certain first principles or fundamental truths contained in the Scriptures, that should be well defined and clearly understood, and made the foundation of the entire superstructure of our faith. And having laid a correct and permanent basis, we may proceed from one degree to another until we arrive at true and satisfactory conclusions. First principles should govern our investigations on every subject; and whatever stands opposed to acknowledged and known truths, we may safely decide has no reasonable claims to our confidence and belief. What do the Scriptures teach us concerning the Supreme Being? "GOD IS LOVE." In view of this simple declaration, which expresses a truth immensely important, we should carefully exclude from our credenda every principle that stands opposed in its nature or tendency to *love*. God is not divided against himself. His nature is pure and simple, as it is holy. And being LOVE, he must be free from all absolute hatred. Is the Deity a Being of wisdom and knowledge? The

same source responds, "*His understanding is infinite*"—"*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*" Nothing has ever been concealed from his clear and all-searching vision—every event, however remote, is present to his view.

"Eternity, with all its years,
Stands present in thy view;
To thee there's nothing old appears,
Great God, there's nothing new."

The destiny of every human being was as fully known to his mind before the earth was moulded into form, as it will be when the trump of the arch-angel shall arouse the sleeping dead, and time shall be no more!

And what is the character of God? A mere manifestation of his nature, which is love. But his word answers, "*The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*" —he "*is kind to the unthankful and evil.*" His benevolence and mercy extend not only to the faithful and just, but even to the evil and wicked of our race. And if his mercy is over all his works, there lives not a soul beyond the extent and influence of that boundless mercy. So long as man has a being, and in whatever

world he may exist, he is a work of God, and therefore lives within the sphere of divine goodness, tender mercies, and loving-kindness. Does God devise any plans in reference to the ends of his works, and will the purposes of his will unfailingly be accomplished? A direct reply comes from the revelation of his truth.—"*He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*"—he "*worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*"—"*declaring the end from the beginning*"—and "*whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.*"

Here then are plain, but most essential truths, that should be well understood in the outset. These things should be firmly fixed in the mind before any progress is attempted in the work of applying them to the various and discordant doctrines that prevail in the world. They have the most direct and important bearing upon every item of faith to which we are required to yield the assent of the mind and to embrace with the heart. They form, indeed, the only true foundation of rational Christian belief. Whatever fairly and legitimately results from these acknowledged and undoubted premises,

must be *true;* while that which contradicts one of these principles, cannot be otherwise than *false.* Let the learner, then, *begin* where he ought, and steadily progress in that light which will beam upon his pathway from first principles and undeniable truths, ever remembering that error alone is inconsistent, while one truth never contradicts another; and carefully avoiding all the jargon and subtleties of narrow-minded and bigoted schoolmen, and he cannot fail to embrace the great truth of Christian revelation, that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." No other conclusion can be reasonably drawn from the nature, character and purposes of the Living God. Benevolence prompts his power—wisdom forms the plans of his will—and omnipotence will execute his designs, and carry into perfect completion every intention of his mind. He is above all, and through all, and in all; and no power in the universe can ever stay his sovereign hand, or defeat the accomplishment of all his pleasure!

CHAPTER VII.

DESIGN IN THE CREATION OF MAN.

In view of the foregoing, let us now endeavor to consider *the design of God in the creation of man.* To say that a wise being never acts without design, is but to repeat a truism, that will not be disputed by any man who is capable of thought. And as God is a being of infinite wisdom, what was the great purpose of his will, when he spake the world into existence by the word of his power, and imparted the vital energy to man? If "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," the ultimate destiny of the human race must have been embraced in this all-comprehensive knowledge. No possible *intentions* could render the end more certain. And if there be any difference between knowledge and design with God, the distinction is so nice that we shall not attempt to explain it; nor would the decision of this question affect the nature of our subject. The Scriptures teach us that God both *knows* and *declares*

the end from the beginning. And we are now concerned to ascertain for what end the author of wisdom gave existence to man. He needed no experiment to test his power, to try his skill, or to declare his greatness. He was independently glorious and perfectly happy; and no possible advantage could accrue to himself from the exercise of his omnific energies. He was certainly a being of immense beneficence and illimitable goodness; and if any principle formed the preponderating power in his mind, that principle was LOVE.

Who doubts that such was GOD, when the smiling morn of creation dawned in brightness, and the light of Heaven burst in glory upon the overspreading darkness of chaotic night? He could have harbored no ill will toward the unoffending creatures whom he intended soon to call forth into life from the unconscious slumbers of nonentity. No feeling opposed to goodness and love found place in his pure and holy mind. There was no counsellor to instruct him—no power without to direct his will. Existing alone in the plenitude of perfect glory and bliss, he conceived the plan and began the work. And the only reasonable conclusion is, that benevo-

lence prompted his creative power, while the great purpose of his will was the communication of happiness. In this conclusion, we rejoice to believe, that nearly the whole Christian world now heartily concur. The notion that the great and good God ever created a being with the intention of making it endlessly miserable, is so entirely repugnant to every natural feeling of the human heart, and withal involves such unprovoked and wanton cruelty, that few are so blinded by error and sufficiently hardened against God and their fellows, as to admit such a thought into the articles of their faith. We know that this most unmerciful and horrible dogma is embodyed in a manual which many still professedly receive as the standard of their faith. But even they will generally deny this doctrine, or seek to modify its meaning by a species of reasoning, which at once evinces their own deep and utter abhorrence of such blasphemous error!

The prevailing notion throughout Christendom, is that God originally designed that man's existence should be a blessing—that all men should ultimately be raised to immortal life and heavenly joys. This belief, which works like leaven, and will yet purify the Church of mon-

strous errors, has even found its way into Churches still denominated Calvinistic. And the followers of the Genevan Reformer find themselves obliged no longer to proclaim in "high places" what their Confession of Faith still declares, that God from all eternity elected some men to everlasting life, and passed by and fore-ordained the remainder to dishonor and misery! A sentiment more destitute of every characteristic of loveliness, and more replete with cruelty, never emanated from the blindness of superstition or the corruption of error; and it is only befitting the fabled abodes of darkness and of demons! We say nothing of the character of its believers—they are generally as good as other people, and perhaps far better than ourselves—but we speak of the sentiment itself; and pronounce it a libel upon the character of God, a disgrace to the very name of religion, and a foul reproach to humanity itself! We are not astonished that the advocates and believers of this notion should so rapidly decrease in number; and we think the spirit of prophecy is not needed to divine that the period will soon come when no man in civilized life will dishonor his Maker by giving utterance to such a thought!

Proof of the position is no longer demanded, that God commenced the work of creation with the design of rendering every man a *gainer* by existence. Nay, the fact is equally accredited that he intended the vast family of man for a higher and happier—an immortal and heavenly existence beyond all the limits of change and decay. His designs stretched into the spiritual world; and he constituted man a living soul, and impressed him with his own divine likeness, with a view to his ultimate and unchangeable destiny, "*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*" His knowledge compassed the *end*, as well as the beginning of man. The present state of being is but the incipient stage of man's existence; and his high destination as the child of God will be attained in that world where men and angels are equal, and share together the unspeakable bliss of heaven.

It would be an impeachment of the wisdom and benevolence of God to suppose that his actual designs toward man extend no farther than the present life, and that our condition in the future and permanent state of existence will be determined by mere fortuity. Paul, in his

eloquent address from Mars' hill to the Athenian people, after declaring the existence of that God in whom is the breath of all mankind, proceeded to testify of his designs toward our race, saying, "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, *and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation.*" This determination of God, made of old, had respect to the places and limits of the habitations of men on the earth. And shall we suppose that God would make such arrangements with reference to the temporal existence of man, and yet have no certain determinations beforehand in his own mind in regard to the final and permanent life of the heirs of immortality? The Scriptures forbid the thought that God has any designs of limited extent, or that any thing affecting our ultimate interests was ever with him a matter of *uncertainty.*

We read in the 46th of Isaiah, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." We do not affirm that this language was uttered

with particular reference to the final destiny of any man. But it plainly asserts the fact that the purposes of God extend from the *commencement* of his works to the *end* which he designs to accomplish. And we think the spirit of the passage fully justifies the conclusion that the same is true in reference to the great end for which man was called into existence. The end of man is not here attained; and the present life, compared to the future, is scarcely more than the shadow to the substance. We can think of no reason why man should form any exception to the works, of which God declares the end from the beginning. But in view of the instructions of our Savior, that a man is much better than a sheep, and that God will much more certainly feed and clothe his children, than supply the fowls of the air with food, we may reasonably conclude that man stands pre-eminent among the works of God, of which the *end* was determined from ancient times by an immutable counsel!

But we need not dwell upon this point. It is certain, and the fact is not disputed, that God designed the end of man, when his sovereign fiat went forth, and the shapeless void of chaos gave place to the smiling face of creation. And the

fact is equally incontrovertible, and almost to the same extent certainly believed, that the end designed was compatible with goodness and love, and contemplated the immortal glory and endless felicity of the human race.

Keeping these things distinctly in view, let us now endeavor to sum up the conclusion of the whole matter. The premises, which are universally acknowledged, may be considered irrefutable. God is a Being of infinite wisdom, power and goodness; and he designed man for ultimate happiness. These are the premises; and there must be a fault somewhere if we come to opposing conclusions. And it will be perceived that the grand difference between our opposers and ourselves is found in the different results at which we arrive in reasoning from the same general principles.

The importance of the subject will justify a slight repetition. God is perfectly wise, powerful and good. When he had completed the handywork of creation, and pronounced the whole "very good," he designed all mankind for a happy destiny. This truth is clearly taught and most happily expressed, in the first question and answer of the Westminster Assem-

bly's Catechism—"Q. *What is the chief and highest end of man?* A. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, AND FULLY TO ENJOY HIM FOREVER." Such is the *end* for which man was designed by his Maker. And the grand question to be settled, is, will God's original intentions be accomplished? or will his designs be defeated, and his purposes annulled? We maintain that God's counsel will stand, and that he will do all his pleasure; while others contend that some men will never reach the end for which God designed them!

Our view of the subject appears consistent with itself, and with the acknowledged principles from which it is drawn—its opposite is at utter variance with the premises agreed upon, and forms a strange anomaly in reasoning from propositions to conclusions. If the infinitely wise, powerful and benevolent Jehovah at last fails in the execution of his holy designs, to what conceivable cause shall that deplorable failure be attributed? Neither disposition nor ability is lacking on his part. Why then, we ask, will his kind and gracious intentions never be fulfilled? Are we told that man is a *free-agent*? But such an answer, though it has silenced many,

gives no satisfaction to the thinking mind, that will not stop short of the truth. Suppose man to be perfectly free—far more free than the winds of heaven, must the purposes and designs of the all-wise and omnipotent God, *on that account*, be of doubtful fulfilment, and liable to ultimate failure? Has man obtained any new and wonderful powers, of which God knew nothing when he formed the plan of creation, and designed our race to glorify their Maker "*and fully to enjoy him forever?*"

We cannot possibly perceive that the alleged fact of man's free-agency has any necessary connexion with our subject. Whatever agency man may possess, none will doubt that it has been derived from God, and was conferred for wise and benevolent purposes, compatible with the glorious and happy end for which man was designed. But to suppose that our Maker has given his creatures a power, by which his own plans will be thwarted, and his best designs forever defeated, is certainly to charge him with great folly and improvidence! And yet many seem to suppose that a mere assertion, touching the freedom of the human will, is abundantly sufficient to silence all inquiry and settle every dispute!

But must we believe that the fulfilment of God's designs depends upon the voluntary but uncertain choice of man? Shall our Maker be robbed of his glory, and his feeble creatures clothed with the attributes of divinity? And shall we abandon all the premises upon which we have agreed, and look to frail worms of the dust for the termination of works, commenced by the Sovereign Lord? We cannot sanction such reasoning. And we seriously doubt whether it really satisfies any candid, unprejudiced and reasoning mind!

Are we asked, if God really designed all men for happiness, why are not all happy now? We answer, men have not here attained to their final end—they are still subjects of divine discipline—and though they are sinful and suffering, and now come short of the glory of God, the promise has been given and the purpose declared, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Temporarys in and suffering cannot defeat the divine intentions in regard to the *end* of man. But when it is declared that man's *final* condition will be dishonor-

able and miserable, it is supposed that God will fail in his undertaking, and eternally behold the monuments of his defeat!

"*Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.*" What he knows cannot be uncertain—what he has purposed can never change. And Paul speaks of the *immutability* of his counsel, confirmed by the oath of Him who cannot lie. The only reasonable conclusion, then, is, that whatever may be the sins and sufferings of man, the pleasure of the Lord will at last be accomplished, and the vast fraternity of man exalted to that divine and heavenly life for which our Maker at first designed us. This glorious consummation is declared in the record of divine truth: for we are there certified that every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. And we are also assured that when the last enemy of man shall be destroyed, and all men are made alive in Christ, this same God and Father *shall be* ALL IN ALL.

CHAPTER VIII.

PATERNITY OF GOD.

We have already considered the *design* of God in the creation of man. Reasoning from the acknowledged nature and attributes of the Supreme Being, the conclusion seemed unavoidably to follow that he originally intended all men for ultimate happiness, and also that his benevolent purposes cannot possibly fail in the end. These conclusions are the legitimate deductions of sober reason and plain common sense; and no man who admits the correctness of the premises, can possibly avoid them, except by a strange and unauthorised course of reasoning, that would be utterly condemned by all in regard to any other subject. We consider the argument referred to unanswerable, except on the supposition that there is *chance* in the economy of God. If nothing is certain in the divine mind—nothing really known unto God from the beginning of the world—and if man's immortal

destiny depends upon his own voluntary but very uncertain choice—then it must be admitted that no reasonable argument in proof of either universal or partial salvation can be drawn from the nature and attributes of God, or from his kind intentions when he first inspired man with the breath of life! If all is *uncertainty*, the clearest reasoner is as likely to be wrong as right; and according to this notion, even the Scriptures must be considered a very imperfect rule of faith. Investigation is no longer necessary; and we need only wait patiently to ascertain the final issue of the strange and unaccountable workings of chance!

But we have clearly proved that the Scriptures entirely disallow of any thing like uncertainty or chance in the mind of God; and certify us that all his works are known unto him from the beginning of the world—that he declares the end from the beginning—and that while his counsel shall stand, he will do all his pleasure. And our argument, which defies refutation, derives all its stability and force from these manifest truths of the divine word. In acknowledgment of the premises, no man can avoid the conclusion that we have drawn, except

by a gross departure from Scripture truth, and from every principle of sound reason. We can never be driven from our position by the senseless cry of "Fatalism." We believe that God, and not "Fate," is the Governor of all worlds and the sovereign disposer of every event. We believe that no freedom or power in man can thwart any of his purposes or defeat any of his undertakings. And we believe that all his promises will be fulfilled—all his designs executed—and all his benevolent intentions accomplished in the eventual glory and happiness of all mankind. And if all this constitutes "Fatalism," we would rather be "Fatalists" than believers in chance!

We shall now consider the parental character of the Divine Being, and produce the argument derived from this relation of God to man in proof of universal salvation. We have an interesting subject. And we hope to treat it in such a manner as to appeal at once both to reason and affection; that while the judgment is convinced, the heart may be improved.

We find a most clear and beautiful synopsis of Christian faith in the 4th chapter of Ephesians. The whole substance of the matter is here brought distinctly into view within a very

small compass. And all that we are required to believe is comprised in the several fundamental principles of doctrine here enumerated. "There is" (says the apostle) "one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." This "one body" is the human race. Jesus Christ is declared to "be the head of every man." All men, therefore, are constituent members of a common body. This "one spirit" is the Holy Ghost, or the spirit of divine truth, that sanctifies and regenerates the heart of man. This "one hope" is of immortality, and is sure and steadfast as an anchor of the soul upon the sea of mortal life. This "one Lord" is Jesus Christ "the Son of the Living God" and "the Savior of the world." "He is Lord of all," both the living and the dead. And of all that the Father hath given him he will lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day. This "one faith" is the faith of Abraham, which embraces all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth, and contemplates the final blessedness of all mankind in the heavenly nature of the second man, even the

quickening spirit of immortal life. This "one baptism" is that which was merely prefigured by the immersions in water of the Baptist, and it is the baptism of the soul into the spirit of divine truth, grace and love. And this "one God" is the Father of all spirits; and he "is above all, and through all, and in you all." In him is the breath of all mankind, and unto him belong the issues from death. All now live in him; and when the Messiah's mediatorial kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, this one God shall "*be all in all.*"

Such is briefly the substance of Christian faith—of the faith that we cherish, and in which we rejoice with inexpressible joy. It embraces all that benevolence can require, and fully satisfies every pure and good desire of the human soul. Nothing short of this faith can give perfect rest and peace to the heart. And while we richly enjoy its blessings, we would zealously labor to bring the votaries of error and the victims of tormenting fear under its benign and happy influence. We know that Christian people cannot be satisfied with the unmerciful dogma of endless woe. They cannot rejoice with a fulness of joy in the awful prospect of infinite

and ceaseless agonies for kindred and friends, or even for any soul of man. Many of them are seeking and feeling after a better—a gospel faith. And we desire to assist them in their efforts, and to do them good. It is a pity that any man who has ever experienced the influence of a Savior's love, should feel obliged to believe in violation of every benevolent affection of his nature that God will doom some of his offspring to the suffering of endless and unmerciful torments! And we pray God to assist us in our endeavors to deliver our Christian brethren from the power of a wretched heathen dogma, and enable them to rejoice in that glorious gospel of the blessed God, which is good tidings of great joy that shall be to all people!

We are informed in the Scripture record of the creation of the world, that man was *created in the image of God.* We are not taught that any other creature of earth received the impress of the divine likeness. All came into being through the same omnific energies, and were equally adapted to an earthly existence. As animals all may be considered the mere creatures or earth, and of a day. But in ascending the scale of being from the meanest form of animal

existence up to the highest order of creatures that live on the earth, we find that immortal mind holds connexion with flesh and blood, and that there are ties of kindred that bind man to angels and to God! The divine image is not found in the form and fashion of the earthly man, nor in any thing that gives us alliance to the brutes that perish. If we were but earthly beings we should be no more than beasts of a high order. It was in reference merely to our animal nature that Solomon said, "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast." But we are creatures not only of intellect, but also of moral affections and religious sentiments. And the likeness of the invisible God is impressed upon the inner man; and is "the spirit of the Divinity that stirs within us." "There is a spirit in man; and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

The Psalmist in speaking of the exalted dignity of our race among the works of creation, declares that God has made man a *little lower than the angels*, and crowned him with glory and honor. Ps. viii. 5. And our Lord and Savior has certified us that in the resurrection state we shall be *equal unto the angels*. Luke

xx. 35. In view of these declarations of divine truth, we feel authorised to affirm that there is in man a combination of earthly and of angelic existence. We are now lower than the angels, because we live in an incipient state of being, and are subject to the influences of the flesh, to temptations, sufferings and death. Even our Savior, in his humiliation, and during the time when he lived and died in the world, "was made a little lower than the angels." Heb. ii. 9. *He* has ascended above all things, and the angels of God worship him. We shall in like manner ascend; but not to the same height with the exalted Prince of life and the Savior of the world. We shall become "*equal* unto the angels"—he is greater than all, "and little less than God."

We view man as the connecting link between irrational existence and angelic nature—between earth and heaven. And though he is subject to feelings and passions that belong to brutes, there are principles in his nature that give him kindred to the angels and affinity to God. His religious faculties distinguish him above all other earthly creatures; and his powers of progression bear sufficient testimony to the fact that his na-

ture is not only higher, but different from that which is possessed by any other inhabitant of the world. He possesses peculiar feelings and powers, of which there is not the slightest manifestation in any other creature of earth. No possible limits can be assigned to his capabilities of improvement; while progression is a thing entirely unknown among all other creatures with which we are acquainted. He naturally seeks after the Being that made him; and "as the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth his soul after the Living God." And his intellectual, moral, and religious faculties abundantly attest his filial relation to "the God of the spirits of all flesh."

As man was created in the image of his Maker, we find that the Scriptures speak of God as the Father of our race. The mere act of communicating a revelation to the world, was a plain recognition on the part of the Deity of this relation. He addresses men as his children; and requires of all that obedience and love which the filial obligations impose. To brutes he reveals nothing; and the mere instincts of their nature are the rules of their lives. They are incapable of any spiritual communion with God; and

could be profited by no new manifestation of the Power that gave them existence. But man has been visited with messages of truth and love from Heaven, and addressed as one bearing high and holy kindred to his Maker. That superiority by which man is thus distinguished, is the likeness or image of God. It is found in our affections, our powers, and our capacities. This image of the Divinity is the chief glory of our nature, and the only thing that constitutes us the children of God. It is an emanation from heaven, though dwelling in the flesh. And when it shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and clothed with an immortal body, it will rise to an equality with the angels, and be in the highest and most perfect sense, *the child of God.*

The paternity of God was not clearly revealed and fully realized by man under the dispensation of the Old Testament. He was received rather as a Sovereign Ruler and Judge, than as a Father; and to a great extent rather feared than loved. He was clothed with majesty and terror, and his name was an awful sound. His worshippers approached him with feelings of dread, and not with the confidence and trust of children. For many ages so much as the name

of *Father* seems not to have been applied by man to his Maker. Moses, we believe, first used this appellation in reference to the Deity, in his farewell address to the people of Israel. But the name appears to have been mentioned in that case with but little understanding of its holy and endearing charms. It occurs occasionally afterwards throughout the ancient scriptures; and perhaps some of the Seers and Prophets enjoyed a tolerable understanding of the paternity of God to the human family. But we think the mass of the Jewish people knew but very little of this relation of God, and had no thought of worshipping him as a Father. "For the *law* was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ."

When, therefore, we come to the better and more perfect revelation of the Gospel, we find that the object of our devotions is represented in the parental character. Jesus teaches us to worship the *Father*, and to pray to our *Father* who is in heaven. This relation of God to man is constantly and prominently set forth throughout the whole of the new covenant of promise; and every other relation meets in and harmonizes with the character of a Father. One of

the excellencies of the Gospel above the older Scriptures, is found in its clearer revelations and plainer instructions with respect to the relation that subsists between God and the human race. The veil that formerly obscured the Deity from the vision of man, has been rent in twain and taken away; and he now appears in the full light of the Gospel as THE FATHER.

But an inquiry of vast importance is here suggested to the mind. How far does the paternal relation of God extend? How many of our race are his children? We desire to answer these questions in the spirit of candor, and according to the testimony of the Scriptures. And we need not say that a vitally important point of doctrine is involved in the answer. We are to inquire whether the relation of which we speak is really natural, or merely adventitious—whether it is similar to that which exists between parent and child on earth, or something that grows out of certain conditions of the mind of man, and is uncertain in its continuance.

A few passages of the New Testament may properly be introduced in this place. We are informed in the 23d chapter of Matthew, that our Savior addressed a multitude of people,

among whom were his own disciples, and the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; *and all ye are brethren.* And call no man your father upon the earth: *for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*" In this place Jesus certainly declared that his friends and enemies were *brethren*, and therefore members of the same family; and that the same God was the Father of them all. And if the Scribes and Pharisees, who were influenced by an evil spirit, and were estranged from truth and righteousness, were really the children of God, this relation could not have been the mere effect of circumstances. They had performed no work sufficient to secure the paternity of the Lord—there was no conformity of life in them to the requisitions of the Gospel, that could ever have merited or produced this relation. And yet so far as the actual relation was concerned, no distinction was made between them and the obedient disciples of the Master. They sustained different characters, it is true; and in a certain sense, that all can understand, and which we shall hereafter explain, the enemies of Christ were not the children of God. But if the whole

multitude addressed were not in reality the members of one family and the children of a common Father, our Lord employed language that did not express his meaning, and which we are unable to understand.

Again, we learn from the 17th chap. of Acts, that when Paul preached the Gospel in Athens, he found the men of that city exceedingly ignorant and superstitious; so much so indeed that they reared an altar and rendered devotions to a God, of whom they professed to have no knowledge. The apostle declared to them the true and living God; and also sanctioned the sublime sentiment of one of their own poets, that man, irrespective of circumstances or character, is the child of God. Paul said, "For in him [God] we live and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, '*For we also are his offspring.*'" The sentiment of the poet was thus confirmed, and sealed with the truth of inspiration. The Athenians had not *become* the children of God by the exercise of repentance, the performance of good works, and the adoption of the spirit of truth. They did not even know God; but still they were his offspring. And surely if the Athenians in that

state of mental blindness and ignorance in which Paul found them, were the children of God, our filial relation to the Father of spirits naturally exists, and is not the mere effect of adventitious circumstances. What was it that constituted them the offspring of the Deity? The possession of that divine image which God impressed upon our race, and thus declared us a branch of that "whole family in heaven and earth," of which he is the Parent! And as they were God's children, it may in truth be said in reference to all men, "for one is your Father, which is in heaven."

Again, in the 8th chapter of Romans, Paul says, "The spirit itself beareth *witness* with our spirits that we are the children of God." The fact here stated is worthy of particular attention. The spirit is declared to be a *witness*, and the testimony which it bore was that the Christians were the children of God. Truth must exist before the witness testifies; and the office of a witness is not to create truth, but to make known that which is true. If Paul and his Christian brethren had not been the actual children of God *before* the witness testified, the witness would have borne false testimony. But

they were the offspring of the Deity, and the testimony of the Spirit of truth fully acquainted them with this fact, and enabled them to enjoy the relation of children. If a man have not this spirit within him, he is a stranger from God; and although he is in fact a child of the Father of the spirits of all flesh, he cannot enjoy the blessings of sonship. The witness, therefore, makes no change in the truth itself; but simply acquaints man with that which is true. All the change takes place in man himself; and in coming to the knowledge of the truth, he rejoices to find in God a benevolent Parent. The spirit bears the same testimony to all who receive it; and in every case it is equally true: for God is the Father of all.

Once more, Paul is equally explicit in declaring the universal extent of the divine paternity, in Ephesians iv. 6, where he testifies that there is "*one God and Father of all.*" We find nothing in the connexion of this passage to limit its signification to any portion of the human race; but the nature of the subject plainly requires that it should be understood in the fullest sense. As certainly as "there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism," there *is* "*one God and*

Father of all." This declaration is so plain and so manifestly expresses the universal paternity of the Supreme Being, that we can offer no comment, and none is needed to elucidate its meaning.

We are aware of the common opinion that the divine image has been lost in man by reason of sin. But upon what plausible grounds this opinion is founded we have never been informed. The Scriptures declare that man was created in the image of his Maker; but we have never been able to find the passage which declares that this image has ever been lost. James declared in his day that men were "made after the *similitude* of God." Jas. iii. 9. If men had not ceased to be created in the image of God at that time, we should like to be informed when so great a misfortune befel our race.

But this talk about man having lost the divine image is unworthy of notice. As well might we say that man has ceased to be a man. If any one of our race is not a child of God, that individual is perfectly free from all filial obligations to his Maker, and owes no more obedience than a beast. He is lost from our race, and holds no fraternal connexion with the human

family. But the absurdity of such a notion is too glaring to require formal confutation. And it would seem that no man who is at all conversant with the Scriptures, and who ever takes the pains to think, could harbor a supposition so meanly preposterous.

We may, however, be reminded of the fact that the Scriptures speak of some men as being children of the Devil. The fact is not denied; but we fear that it has been strangely misunderstood. Are we to suppose that an evil being has created, and preserves in existence, and supplies the wants of a part of the human race? Were the Jews who were called serpents and a generation of vipers, the actual children of a reptile? And was Judas who was called the son of perdition, really begotton of destruction? In all these things the relation is not real, but figurative. A child of the devil is an evil and wicked person. The character exhibited is taken for the man himself. A generation of vipers means men full of cursing and bitterness—with the poison of asps under their tongues, and their hearts filled with murder. And a son of perdition means one doomed to destruction. An actual child of God may in spirit and character be a child of hell. But whatever man may be

in feeling and conduct—in the principles that govern their lives—and in the objects of pursuit that engage their attention, no fact is more positively affirmed in the Scriptures, than that there is "one God and Father of all."

When we reflect upon the nature of that relation which binds together earthly parents and their children, we are at once convinced that the relation which subsists between the immortal Father of spirits and the human race, is not the result of accident, or of any thing performed by man. Your children are bound to you by the ties of kindred before they know you, and whatever may be their character. There is a natural relationship subsisting between father and child, which cannot be created by obedience, nor destroyed by disobedience. If we are in reality the offspring of God, we are so before we know him; and whatever may be our sinful wanderings and unworthiness of character, we still bear the same relation. In feeling, and spirit, and character we may be the servants of sin and the children of Satan. But the ties of spiritual kindred that subsist between the Father of spirits and ourselves can never be dissolved; and if they were, it is certain that all our filial *obligations* would at once be destroyed. The relation

of parent and child is not the result of adventitious circumstances. It exists independently of any peculiar character in either party; and though they be estranged and know not each other, the parental and the filial relation still exist. And, indeed, we find that the Lord called to the Israelites, in their greatest sinfulness, saying, "Turn, O backsliding *children*."

Can we view the Deity as the "God and Father of all" mankind, and still suppose that there is a portion of our race to whom he bears no parental affection and love? Will he ever, under any conceivable circumstances, withdraw his fatherly goodness, and become hardened against any that were created in his image and bear his divine likeness? The good father provides for the wants of his children, and seeks to bless them; and though he may be strictly just in his discipline toward them, he still bestows upon them unnumbered favors that have never been merited. He is kind to his offspring before they know him; and his love follows them through every scene of life even unto death. The wayward and disobedient are objects of his tender compassion; and he never ceases his efforts to reclaim them from the ways of folly and transgression, and to restore them to wisdom and

peace. And the man who should become the foe of any of his children, and subject them to fierce curses without intending ever to do them any good, would forfeit the name and character of a parent, and stand before the world a monster in cruelty, and an object of universal execration and disgust! No matter what might be the ingratitude and vileness of his offspring; if he were to treat them with revenge or maliciousness, or abandon them to the worst imaginable fate, he would be not only unworthy the name of a parent, but a disgrace to humanity, and little less than a fiend incarnate! To impute such conduct to any man that breathes, would be the greatest indignity, and the worst injury that could be inflicted upon his character.

Shall we suppose that God's parental love to the children of men, is less constant than that which an earthly parent cherishes for his offspring? Is it a thing to be lost or gained at pleasure by the fitful choice and uncertain efforts of man? Can God be the Father of men to-day, and their foe to-morrow? Or, continuing the Father of all during all times and throughout eternity, will he contend forever and be always wroth against any of his offspring; and preserve them in existence merely that they

may endure ceaseless and merciless torments? This is surely a serious charge to bring against that Being who is declared to be Love—who is good unto all—who is the God and Father of all—and who is without variableness or even the shadow of turning. Such an accusation should not be made on slight grounds; nor without the most weighty and irresistible reasons. If such be the character of God, alas! that the morn of creation ever dawned, or man ever derived the breath of life from the great Fountain of being!

But let us briefly notice the comparisons of the Scriptures between an earthly parent and the Father of spirits. We may thus ascertain which bears the strongest relation, and whose love is the most enduring. Our Savior said, Matt. vii., "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will ye give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" Jesus waited for no answer to these questions; for he knew full well that but one could be given by any man possessing a single feeling of humanity; but he proceeded at once to draw the comparison;—"If ye then, being *evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven give

good things to them that ask him?" The comparison here introduced is not between *asking and not asking;* but between an earthly parent and the Father of all spirits. If the former, with the little and inconstant love that man possesses, will supply the wants and regard the happiness of his needy and dependant offspring; certainly the latter, who is the fountain of all benevolence, and whose love never changes, and who is the "God and Father of all," will ever continue the friend of the whole human race, and at last crown all with a parent's blessings. The difference presented in the comparison, is all in favor of the superior, endless and changeless love of the Lord. And in view of this testimony of the great Teacher, who can believe that God will adopt principles in his government of the world, that would be odious and unmerciful in man; and inflict tortures, or suffer his children to endure agonies, that will never cease, and never be designed to result in blessings? Lord, forgive the ignorance of the man who can thus believe, and grant him repentance unto life.

The comparison is still stronger in the 49th of Isaiah, where we read, "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking

child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they *may* forget, *yet will I not forget thee.*" Here the bare possibility is admitted that the mother may cease to regard with fond affection her tender and helpless child. Such cases have occurred; but to the honor of WOMAN be it said, they have been rare indeed. But strong and deathless as the love of woman's heart is for her cherished infant, it is but as a drop to the ocean, compared to the immeasurable and immutable love which the "God and Father of all" bears to his children! God *never forgets*—never becomes hardened against his offspring—and he will therefore never abandon any soul of man to remediless woe, and much less become himself the relentless and merciless tormentor!

If we consider the comparisons of Scripture in regard to parental discipline, we shall find that the same conclusion follows, and that it is equally honorable to the divine character. Moses was instructed to say unto the children of Israel, "Thou shalt also consider in thy heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." Deut. viii. 5. How does a man chasten his child? and for what purpose is the rod applied? Does he make suffering the

object, and aim to inflict an ultimate injury upon his offspring? The man who should be guilty of such conduct, would forfeit all claim to the name of a parent; and every human being with the slightest sensibility, would be shocked at such vile and worse than barbarous conduct! And ought not men to stop and pause, before they presume to charge any such procedure upon the God and Father of all spirits? If he chastens as a father and loves more than a mother, he will never inflict an unnecessary stripe, nor grieve his helpless creatures merely to cause them pain.

The comparison stated by Paul is far stronger. He says, "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Heb. xii. 9—11. From this passage we learn that

although earthly parents are subject to passion, and sometimes chastise under wrong influences, God is always actuated by the same pure and benevolent feelings, and always has in view the same righteous and peaceful end. He may cause the foolish votary of vice to suffer grievously for a season; but that suffering will be beneficial to the creature, and worthy of the God of Love! There is an *afterward* to the sufferings of those who are chastened of the Lord. And when all punishment shall have done its work, the fruits of righteousness and peace shall fill all hearts, the Lord shall rejoice in his works, and all who have borne the image of the earthy man shall also bear the image of the heavenly, and "be equal unto the angels."

Here then is our conclusion. God is the Father of all men—his parental love never fails nor changes—he will consider the wants and provide for the happiness of his offspring—his chastenings are designed for benevolent ends, and will ultimately result in happiness to the sufferer—he will be glorified in all his works—and through whatever scenes of trial and discipline man may pass, the time will come when every tongue shall swear, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength." Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

THE WILL OF GOD.

In view of the arguments already presented in favor of Universalism, we feel justified in assuming certain important positions without any additional proof. We have shown that God originally designed all mankind for ultimate glory and happiness. We have proved that he is the "Father of all;" and that the filial relation which binds man to him is not the result of any thing adventitious, nor liable ever to be destroyed. And we may now view God as the universal and immutable Parent, eternally well disposed toward all his offspring.

These facts are established by the united testimony of reason and Scripture. And as truth is always consistent with itself, we have a right to assume that the divine word teaches nothing of a contrary nature. If God is the unchangeable Father of all spirits, his disposition toward man cannot be otherwise than benevolent. And

being at first "good unto all," his goodness can never experience mutation, neither become circumscribed in its influence. God is far exalted above the possibility of change; and passion finds no place in his infinitely pure and holy mind. Uninfluenced by any thing from without, his disposition and all his acts, spring from the impulses of his own nature. With a perfect knowledge of all his works from the beginning of the world, and with a certain understanding of all possible events, however remote, no intention of his will can be liable to defeat—no purpose of his mind can ever be frustrated. And if we can clearly ascertain "the determinate counsel" of God with respect to any particular end of his economy, the fact itself, will afford the strongest reason for believing in the certain accomplishment of that end. We may not understand all the means necessary for the completion of the work, nor be able to answer every objection and reconcile all seeming difficulties; but we are still confident in the belief that God can never be disappointed in any undertaking.

In considering any subject of Bible truth, it is highly important that we keep constantly in view the infinitely benevolent and immutable

nature of the Supreme Being. There is a proneness in man to ascribe his own weaknesses and passions to the object of his devotions, and to view his God as a Being in too many respects like unto himself. The Psalmist speaks of persons in his day who thought that God was altogether such as themselves. Perhaps few in these days extend the comparison so far; but we fear that many are equally blinded in regard to the true character of the Divinity. All qualities in man that are good should be attributed to God, and considered in him as infinite and changeless. Thus the Scriptures speak of the Lord as possessing parental affection, inconceivably greater and more enduring than that of any earthly father or mother. But we should be careful that we do not ascribe to the Living God any weakness, passion or change, that belongs only to imperfect beings. And, above all, we should guard against the supposition that there is any thing like *uncertainty* in the Divine Mind. All is perfection with God. With him all time is present—all things are known—and the end is as clearly seen and as fully understood as the beginning.

Owing to the state of the Christian world, we have hitherto been obliged to perform a double

labor. We have first labored to disprove the doctrines of others, and afterwards to establish the truth of our own. No good reason can be given why we should always continue this course of labors. We are justified in throwing the burden of proof, at least in some measure, upon the opposers of God's universal and efficient grace, instead of disproving all their assumptions. The essential truths of religion, concerning which all Christians are perfectly agreed, are all in favor of the doctrine of universal salvation. And when a man asserts that God will fail in any undertaking, or that some men will finally be doomed to an end for which he never designed them, we have a right to demand proof of the awful disappointment. It is not for us to show that God never will be thus defeated in his intentions; but it is the business of our opposers to take hold of the affirmative of the question, and prove that God will at last be baffled in his purposes. Let fair and honorable rules of argumentation govern the disputants on both sides of the question, and we cannot doubt that the conclusion in all minds will be, that God *wills* the salvation of all men, and cannot fail at last to *effect* this desirable object.

We now propose to consider *the will of God*, in reference to the salvation of man. The main proposition that we shall endeavor to establish and illustrate, is, that *God wills the salvation of all men.*

In prosecuting this undertaking, it seems necessary that we should first clearly define what we mean by that salvation, of which we hold that all men will finally partake. The Gospel speaks of a salvation which is peculiar to believers, and which is, in fact, the fruit of Christian faith. It would be folly to pretend that all men enjoy this salvation. Faith belongs to the present world, where the believer in Christ walks by faith, and not by sight; and that salvation which comes through belief of the truth can be experienced by no man who does not believe the record which God hath given of his Son. Persons dying in infancy can know nothing of salvation *by faith*, because they never exercised faith; and yet we believe that they will be subjects of "the common" or universal salvation. *Salvation by faith is the special and present salvation*, enjoyed by none but true believers, and only in this world where *faith* is exercised. But we hold that the gene-

ral and final salvation will not be *of faith*, but will be enjoyed in full sight and perfect *knowledge*. Believing that there will be *no faith* in the spiritual world, we deny that there will be any salvation *by faith* in that abode of celestial light and glory. Faith will there be lost in sight, and hope absorbed in the fruition of knowledge.

But we need not expatiate upon the subject of *salvation by faith*. It must be obvious to all who view the subject with any degree of candor, that though but a part of mankind partake of that present salvation which comes through faith, *all* may nevertheless be "saved and come unto the *knowledge* of the truth." And when we speak of universal salvation, we always refer to the final end of our race. With *salvation by faith* comparatively few of our race are blessed—infants, idiots, heathens, and all unbelievers being excluded. But the proposition which we have attempted to maintain, contemplates the ultimate blessedness of our race in the immortal state of being, and in the heavenly nature of Jesus Christ. This salvation will deliver man from sin and sorrow, and the power of death and corruption, and introduce him into the glorious liberty of the resurrection state. And this salvation, we believe, will be conferred upon the

entire race of Adam. Paul very distinctly speaks of the two salvations, in 1st Timothy iv. 10, where he says, "For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.*" We are now concerned only with the universal salvation; and shall attempt to prove that God wills the salvation of all men.

A passage relating to this subject, that will readily occur to every mind, is found in 1st Timothy, 2d chapter. And that it may be seen in all its force, we will cite the connexion as well as the passage itself. "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; *who will have all men to be saved,* and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." The fact is here most explicitly affirmed that God "*will have all men to be saved.*" And the connexion

in which this declaration is found, instead of weakening its force, plainly forbids any limitation of meaning. The apostle declares it to be good and acceptable in the sight of God that prayers should be made in behalf of *all men;* and the reason assigned, is, that God is good to all men, and wills that all shall be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. It is also added that the Mediator gave himself a ransom for *all.* Jesus tasted death for every man, Heb. ii. 9, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1st John, ii. 2. And, considering all the terms of the context, it would seem preposterous to deny that the divine will in reference to the salvation of man embraces our whole race.

A distinguished commentator* has said in relation to the passage now under consideration, "As God is the God and Father of all; for there is but *one God*, verse 5, and Jesus Christ the Mediator of all; so he gave himself a ransom for all: i. e. for all that God made; consequently for every human soul; unless we suppose that there are human souls of which God is not the Creator; for, the argument of the apostle is plainly this :— 1. There is one God— 2. This

* Clarke

one God is the Creator of all—3. He has made a revelation of his kindness to all—4. He will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth; and 5. He has provided a Mediator for all, who gave himself a ransom for all. As surely as God has created all men, so surely has Jesus Christ died for all men. This is a truth which the nature and revelation of God unequivocally declare."

Again, our Savior says, John vi. 38, 39, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but *the will* of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." The object of Christ's mediation between God and men is here stated, as well as the certain accomplishment of God's will through his agency. He has been appointed to *perform* what God has *willed;* and this *will* is that he should lose nothing of all that the Father hath given him, but should raise it up again at the last day. The meaning seems plain that Jesus has been commissioned to effect the final reconciliation to God of all that have been given into his hands, and over whom he has received power. The object of his mission and labors originated in the Di-

vine Mind, and is hence called *the will of God*, which he has undertaken to accomplish. Jesus has been highly exalted, and invested with all the adequate means for the completion of this work. And if nothing will be lost of all that the Father hath given him, the time will certainly come when all his ransomed subjects will bow in subjection and obedience before him, and confess him Lord to the glory of God the Father!

We have now two important facts before us, and we desire that they may be carefully considered. 1. Jesus, the Savior of sinners, has engaged in the enterprise of *doing the will of God;* and 2. That will is, negatively, that he should lose nothing of all that has been given him, and, positively, that he should raise it up again at the last day, and thus restore all to God. The inquiry that now suggests itself to the mind, is, how many of the human race have been given Christ of the Father? A correct answer to this question will determine the extent of that *will of God*, which our Redeemer has pledged himself to perform. We need not ask what men believe in regard to this subject—the answer must come from higher authority, and the spirit of inspiration shall declare it. We find, in the 2d Psalm, a prophecy in reference to the Messiah, that

will shed light upon this interesting theme. The Lord speaks, saying, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill in Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." This language is in part applied to our Saviour in the New Testament, Heb. i. 5; and we there learn also that he has asked and received the large gift of the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth. He says himself, John xvii., "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: As thou hast given him power over *all flesh*, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." But the Messiah has not only received *power* over all. He proceeds still farther and declares in language too plain to be misunderstood, "The Father loveth the Son, *and hath given all things into his hand.*" John iii. 35. And this fact receives confirmation from those passages which declare Christ to be "the head of every man," 1st Cor. xi. 3, the "Lord of all," Acts x. 36, and "the Saviour of the world," 1st John iv. 14. As God intended him to be the universal Saviour, he delivered all things into his hand, gave him power over all

flesh, caused him to taste death for every man, and to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world! And if all this does not express absolute *universality*, we are either ignorant of the meaning of language, or else the Bible is to us an uncertain rule of faith.

In view of the foregoing, it seems plain and certain, that the *will of God* which Jesus came to perform, is, that all men may at last be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth. Such is the extent, and such the object of God's will in relation to the salvation of our race. As it embraces all, it contemplates the same happy and glorious end for universal humanity. And the great question to be settled is, whether this *will of God* will to some extent fail, or at last be fully accomplished.

Here let us inquire what we are to understand by the *will of God*. This phrase does not bear one uniform signification in all parts of the Scriptures where it occurs. In some places it refers to the commandments of God, or to the duty which his law requires of man. Thus Jesus says, Mark iii. 35, "For whosoever shall do the *will of God*, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother;" by which he meant that whoever was obedient to the *divine law*, stood in a most intimate relation to himself, and

was united to him by better and purer ties than those of natural kindred. He expressed the same general meaning, when he said, John vii. 16, 17, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do *his will*, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." In these passages, and in many others, the will of God is expressive of no determination of his mind in regard to any end of his economy; but merely signifies that duty which his holy law obligates us to perform.

But it seems to us that the phrase in question should be understood in a far different sense, when it relates to any work which God himself means to perform. When he said concerning John the Baptist, "*I will* send my messenger," Luke vii. 27, we undersand that such was his *intention;* and we know that the Baptist was thus certainly sent. And when he said, Isaiah lvii. 16, "For I *will not* contend for ever, neither *will* I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made;" he declared his *determination* not to punish always, but to produce at some time a desirable end, when the contention should cease. When Jesus affirmed that he came to *do the will of God*, he did not mean that he came to be conformed in obedience to the divine commands;

but he undertook to *effect* a particular purpose which originated in the mind of his Father. God *willed* or determined a particular end, and commissioned his Son to accomplish it. The will of God in this case is obviously expressive of what he meant to effect, and seems equivalent to *intention.* And God's will that all men shall be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth, means that such is his pleasure, and such the end that he designs.

The first and highest sense of the will of God, is thus given by several eminent theologians, neither of which held the perfect faith which we cherish. Cruden says, "The will of God is taken, for his absolute will which nothing can withstand." Buck says, the "will of God is taken, for that which he has from all eternity determined, which is unchangeable, and must certainly come to pass." And Calmet says, "it is taken for the absolute and immutable will of God, which nothing can withstand." These authors, it is true, speak of other senses in which the will of God must be understood; and we have admitted, and attempted to show, that this phrase is not always expressive of the same meaning. But we have stated the first definition which they offer, and which we suppose to be the highest and most obvious sense of the

will of God, and perhaps the only sense when used in reference to any object which God means to effect.

And why should it be thought that the will of God must be understood in some inferior sense when applied to the salvation of mankind? It is plain that this will as explained by our Savior, is nothing less than a fixed determination. For he declares that he not only came to do the will of his Father, but that this will is, that of all that the Father hath given him he should *lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day. If there was no *intention* in the divine mind, Jesus had no certain object in view, and was merely trying an experiment, or endeavoring to ascertain what could be done! And if there is no *purpose* with God that *all men* shall be saved, we have no assurance that he really *means* to save one individual of our race! But if God ever had any "determinate counsel," it seems but reasonable to suppose that it would embrace the highest interests of his moral offspring, and therefore include the final destiny of the human family. And in view of all that has been said, we feel justified in concluding that God has *willed* the salvation of all men.

Having shown that God has *willed* the final and glorious destiny of the whole human race,

we wish now to notice the schemes by which our opposers endeavor to evade the just and reasonable conclusion resulting from this important fact. If such is the will of God, why should we doubt that all men will finally be saved? The Arminian objector (and perhaps we shall have no other) will say that it is God's will of *desire* and of *pleasure* that all men should be saved; or in other words, that he *desires* this end, and would be well *pleased* if all men would become holy and righteous, so that it could be accomplished. This is a very common objection, but we are unable to perceive in it any force whatever. If man were the author of salvation, and our destiny depended upon his efforts, the result might be uncertain, and the author might have *desires* that would never be satisfied. But when any such language is applied to the infinite God, his nature and character seem not to be understood; and if he is not considered altogether such a one as ourselves, he is at least supposed to possess some weakness that belongs to humanity.

What is meant by *desire* when applied to God? This word is sometimes at least expressive of uncertainty. We may desire many things which we have no expectation of ever receiving. If there is a probability of gaining the object de-

sired, *hope* is experienced in the mind. But God never *hopes*, and strictly speaking, he can have no *desires*. All things are known unto him, and he sees the end from the beginning. No result of his government or grace can be with him an object of *desire*, because it must be perfectly known, and absolutely certain. Desire has reference to something *future*, but with God all things are *present*. Perhaps the same may be said of *will*. But there is, nevertheless, a distinction between the two, that may easily be understood. *Will* in the divine mind, may be regarded as synonymous with *purpose;* but *desire* seems to imply that the object wished for is *uncertain*. And such is in fact the ground assumed by the Arminian objector. He admits that God *desires* the salvation of all men, but denies that he will finally save all men. Thus the thing *desired* is represented as being uncertain; or rather it is declared to be *certain* of ultimate failure! *Purpose* is perfectly consistent with that which is known and present to the mind of God. But we cannot believe that he ever *desires* a thing, and much less a thing that will never come to pass.

Suppose we should admit that it is merely God's will of *desire* that all men should be saved. Who dare say that this desire will never be satisfied?

The Scriptures declare, that "the desire of the righteous shall be granted." Prov. x. 24. None need be told that it is God who grants the desire of the righteous. And allowing that he has *desires* himself, it would be strange indeed if he would grant the desire of others, and not satisfy his own! The objector, therefore, has a greater labor before him, than merely to show that God's will to save all men means *desire*. He is required to prove that that desire will never be fulfilled; or at least to offer some good reasons for believing that God will fail to effect what he has undertaken to perform. But neither of these points has as yet been established.

As to the notion that God's will means his *pleasure*, this is far less exceptionable than the assumption that it signifies *desire*. This word is used in connexion with the will and purpose of God, as we shall show, and may be regarded as a different term expressing the same idea. It is admitted, then, that the *pleasure* of God is, that all men may be saved. Well, upon what ground is it doubted that this pleasure will be accomplished? Flying from one word to another may enable a man to effect his escape out of a difficulty, provided he is not closely pursued. But we mean to follow our opposers in all their windings, and rout them from every refuge,

until they are brought to the acknowledgement of the truth. Let it be granted that *will* means *pleasure*. The Scriptures will then read, "It is the *pleasure* of God to have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."

Do the Scriptures encourage us to hope that God's pleasure will be done? or do they give us reason to fear that it will never be accomplished? Two passages relating to this subject may here be introduced. Isaiah, xlvi. 9, 10, "I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, *and I will do all my pleasure*." This passage, which we do not say was spoken in reference to the final destiny of any man, shows that God's pleasure is immutable and can never fail. The same truth is again declared in language equally positive and strong, in Isaiah liii. 10. After foretelling the sufferings and death of the Messiah for the redemption of the world, the prophet says of him, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, *and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*." And what is this pleasure of the Lord that shall succeed and be accomplished in the hand of the Mediator? That *all men* shall be saved; and that of all that hath been given Christ, (and the Father hath

given *all things* into his hands) he should *lose nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day! What, then, does the objector gain by substituting the word *pleasure* for *will or purpose?* Surely, nothing. The whole subject appears still the same: and the word of God still testifies that our Lord spoke the truth when he declared that he would draw all men unto himself. John xii. 32.

Again, when we quote the plain passage, God "will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth," we are met with such answers as the following:—Rev. Josiah Hopkins says, in his "Christian Instructor," p. 217, "From this passage it is obvious, that God does as certainly will that all men should be brought to the knowledge of the truth, as that all men should be saved. This, however, is not accomplished." And Rev. Stephen Remington says, in his "Anti-Universalism," page 125, "Our opponents say that this text is a positive affirmation that God will save all men, and if any are finally lost, then his word must fail. I would ask, does not God assert with equal positiveness that he will have all men come unto the knowledge of the truth? And do all men come unto the knowledge of the truth?" Now, we confess that the statements here made are strictly

true. And the answers furnished are altogether in favor of Universalism. It is just as true that God wills all men to "be brought to the knowledge of the truth, as that all men should be saved." Knowledge of the whole truth of God, and perfect salvation, are inseparably connected together; and the one is implied in the other. And as to the question, "do all men come unto the knowledge of the truth?" we answer, this end has certainly not yet been accomplished. We claim no honor for giving the answer, for it seems very plain! And we cannot see the particular object of the question, unless it was merely to say *something*. As well might we ask a believer in the universal resurrection of mankind, "Do all men live in the immortal world?" None suppose that all men *have come* unto the knowledge of the truth. But does it hence follow that they *never will* know the truth and be saved? When arguments are directed against *this point*, they will deserve more consideration than any senseless questions.

We never said nor believed that all men are now saved, or now brought to the knowledge of the truth; but we are happy to believe with Paul, that God "*will have* all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." And we think the Rev. John Wesley saw some-

thing of this truth, when he said, "That general and *unlimited* promise which runs through the whole gospel dispensation, 'I *will* put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts,' *turns all the commands of God into promises*, and consequently that among the rest. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.' The command here is equivalent to a *promise*, and gives us full reason to expect that he will *work in us what he requires of us*." Again, he says, in the same connexion, "The command of God given by St. Peter, 'Be ye holy as he that hath called you is holy, in all manner of conversation,' implies a promise that we *shall be thus holy*. As God has called us to holiness, he is undoubtedly willing, as well as able, to work this holiness in us. For he cannot *mock* his helpless creatures, calling upon them to receive *what he never* INTENDS *to give them*."

We believe that what God *wills* he *intends* to accomplish. And we find that his *will* in regard to the salvation and blessedness of all men in Christ, is so connected with his *purpose* and *good pleasure*, as to leave no room for doubt that these several terms are employed to express the same gospel truth. Paul says of God, Ephesians i. 9, 10, 11, "Having made known

unto us the mystery of his *will*, according to his *good pleasure* which he hath *purposed* in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him *who worketh all things after the counsél of his own will.*" We are here instructed, not only that God has *purposed* the ingathering of all things in Christ, as certainly as he has *willed* this glorious consummation; but also that the execution of the work belongs to him, and that he will complete it according to his own counsel. All uncertainty is excluded; and though all things have been given into the hands of Jesus, he will "*lose nothing*," but draw all men unto himself.

Such is the conclusion that we draw from the will of God concerning the salvation of all men. And we find that our opposers, though the truth is divided among them, teach together the same gospel doctrine. The Arminian Dr. Clarke says, "Because God wills the salvation of all men, therefore he wills that all men should be prayed for. In the face of such a declaration, how can any Christian soul suppose that God ever unconditionally and eternally reprobated

any man! Those who can believe so, one would suppose, can have little acquaintance either with the *nature* of God, or the *bowels of Christ*." And the Calvinistic Dr. Gill says, "The salvation which God wills that all men should enjoy, is not a mere possibility of salvation, or a mere putting them into a salvable state; or a proposal of sufficient means of it to all in his word; but a real, certain, and actual salvation, which he has determined they shall have; and is sure from his own appointment, from the provision of Christ as a Savior for them, from the covenant of grace, in which everything is secured necessary for it, and from the mission of Christ to effect it, and from its being effected by him: wherefore the will of God, that all men should be saved, is not a conditional will, or what depends upon the will of man, or on any thing to be performed by him, for then none might be saved; and if any should, it would be of him that willeth, contrary to the express words of Scripture; but it is an absolute and unconditional will respecting their salvation, and which infallibly secures it," &c.

These statements we most heartily believe. They are perfectly accordant with the truth which we have endeavored to defend and illustrate. And, united together as they ought to be,

they plainly show that we hold all the truth believed by both classes of our opposers. One says God really *wills* the salvation of all men; and the other declares that this will respecting their salvation, "*infallibly secures it.*" The latter finds the will of God that all men should be saved, so *determinate* and *absolute*, as to declare that *all men* cannot really mean all men! But with this assumption we have no concern. We are willing that our opposers should settle the controversy between themselves. In whatever way it may be decided it will be favorable to truth. And if left undecided, all the truth held by both classes constitutes the whole counsel of God, and encourages the hope that he will not be defeated in his purposes, nor disappointed in the accomplishment of his *will!*

When this *will*, *purpose*, or *good pleasure* is fulfilled by "him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will," the world shall be reconciled to God, through Jesus Christ; and the ransomed of the Lord (and he "gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.") "Yea the ransomed of Jehovah shall return: they shall come to Sion with triumph; and perpetual gladness shall crown their heads. Joy and gladness shall they obtain; and sighing and sorrow shall flee away."

CHAPTER X.

ATONEMENT.

Solomon says, Proverbs xvii. 15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." The Book in which these words are found is what its name properly imports—a collection of *proverbs*. It contains but few passages that may be used with propriety as direct proofs of any theoretical doctrine. But it abounds in maxims, involving the most important principles, both of moral and of doctrinal truth. And a judicious and careful investigation of its teachings, may be of the highest service in the discussion of subjects of a purely doctrinal character. While we are opposed to the introduction of far-fetched and overstrained arguments for the support of any cause, we are willing to avail ourselves of every reasonable help to disprove error and elicit truth. And we think it will be no difficult task to show that the obvious sense of the passage cited, certainly stands opposed to, and utterly falsifies a venerated dogma

of human creeds, that shall hereafter be introduced and examined.

The justification of the wicked, and the condemnation of the just, are alike wrong in principle, and equally abominable in the sight of Him who is "a just God." We understand the writer to mean that the wicked are justified, when they are entirely acquitted of all guilt, and condign punishment is all remitted. He would not surely consider it wrong and abominable in the sight of God that the wicked should be reclaimed from the folly and error of their ways, and restored to the wisdom and obedience of the just. But it would be a violation of all righteous and equitable dealing, to overlook the criminal faults and sins of the disobedient, and suffer the wicked to go unpunished. Such procedure, being opposed to every principle of the divine government as declared in the Scriptures, and in contravention to all that deserves to be called equity, is an abomination to the Lord of hosts. Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne; and while that throne securely stands, he can neither clear the guilty, nor sanction the justification of man *in* wickedness.

Condemning the just involves the same odious principle of unrighteousness, and is therefore no less abominable to Him who is "righteous in all

his ways." To visit upon the innocent and unoffending, punishment which none but the guilty deserve, must surely be a detestable thing in the eyes of a holy, just and benevolent Being. And any system of religion that approves such conduct and involves such principles, must be both false in fact, and pernicious in all its tendencies and results. It tends to destroy all proper distinction between justice and its opposite; and it could not be practiced among men without producing the most deleterious effects, both to morals and to happiness. It would remove all protection from the innocent, and offer a bounty upon crime.

Consider for a moment the individual by whom the abomination of which Solomon speaks is practiced. Select, if you please, the Judge of a Court. Two men are apprehended and arraigned before him on the charge of murder. He hears the testimony of witnesses and the pleadings of counsellors; and after becoming acquainted with all the facts in the case, he ascertains that one of the prisoners is *guilty* of the crime alleged, and the other *innocent*. But inseatd of pronouncing sentence according to the evidence, and agreeably to equity and truth, he justifies the wicked man, and condemns the just person. The foul murderer is let loose

again upon society with the stain of innocent blood upon his hands, to commit new depredations upon the property and lives of virtuous citizens; while the unfortunate man who committed no wrong, is slain as a malefactor!

In this case, the penalty of the law was indeed inflicted; that is, a man was executed because a murder was committed. But supposing the law itself to be strictly just in requiring life for life, were the ends of justice really secured in this case? Every man who has any sense of right and wrong, will answer that greater injustice was done, than if both the accused had been set at liberty. The execution of the penalty of the law has no possible connexion with justice, and violates every principle of right, unless the punishment fall upon the *guilty*. If an innocent man should even voluntarily offer himself as a substitute for the atrocious murderer, he could not in justice suffer the penalty which none but the guilty deserved. And if the judge should justify the wicked, and condemn the just, and then plead in justification of himself, that a righteous man had freely consented to bear the punishment which another merited, his plea would be a vile abomination in the view of God, and of all good men! Such a judge would be considered either insane, or else "desperately

wicked;" and certainly no man with any reason in his head or goodness in his heart, could either approve his decision or exonerate him from the crime of murder!

Both guilt and innocency are personal qualities, and cannot be transferred from one individual to another. If I were to commit a capital offence against the laws of my country, the infliction of penalties upon ten thousand persons could neither remove my guilt, nor satisfy the demands of law and justice. *I* should be the criminal, and upon me alone could the punishment of the violated law be justly inflicted. The language of Scripture on this subject is, God "will by *no means* clear the guilty." Exodus xxxiv. 7. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." Isaiah iii. 10, 11. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous *shall be upon him*, and the wickedness of the wicked *shall be upon him*." Ezekiel xviii. 20. "But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." Col. iii.

25. The same general truth is plainly recognized in the declaration that the justification of the wicked and the condemnation of the just, are both abominable to the Lord. And it is certain that this very abomination would be committed, if a wicked man were acquitted, and a just person punished in his stead.

Keeping the foregoing considerations and Scripture texts distinctly in view, let us now direct our attention to the doctrine of *atonement*. Let it be understood that we firmly believe, aye, and greatly rejoice, in this doctrine as we find it set forth in the Scriptures of truth. But we are convinced that monstrous and dangerous errors have long been held by those who style themselves and one another *orthodox* and *evangelical Christians*. We do not know what it is that exclusively entitles them to these agreeable names; and we use these words merely to be understood, but as seldom as possible, because they have been so abominably abused. We wish to state the views of those who arrogate these Christian names, and deny them to others who have found "a more excellent way" and a better faith, in regard to the subject of *atonement*. Such statement seems necessary; and the contrast that shall be drawn will assist the reader

to understand our views and the teachings of the divine word on the subject proposed for discussion.

It is believed, then, that all mankind, on account of the sin of Adam, were made justly liable to the unmerciful wrath of Jehovah, and to the ceaseless torments of hell. This vast amount of suffering and woe would all have been inflicted, but for the most gracious and merciful interposition in our behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ. Divine justice sternly demanded all its claims, and the Father was inexorable in his determination to inflict the full and tremendous penalty of his dishonored and violated law. Vengeance he would have to the full, wherever it might fall; and his righteous law must be vindicated and satisfied, whoever might suffer its fearful penalty. The Son, viewing the sad spectacle of woe and utter ruin, was moved to deep and tender compassion. He pitied the feeble and guilty sons of men; and rather than see his Father execute all his fierce and relentless vengeance, and our whole race sink into unceasing and hopeless wretchedness, he generously and most disinterestedly consented that the uplifted sword of justice and of wrath might be bathed in his own blood! God graciously accepted the offer; for there was now an oppor-

tunity to execute vengeance and be satisfied without losing the whole world; and in order to obtain the desired satisfaction for his broken law, he smote in fury his unoffending Son! Dr. Watts says of this stupendous work:

"How justice frown'd and vengeance stood,
To drive me down to endless pain,
But the great Son propos'd his blood,
And heavenly wrath grew mild again.

Once 't was a seat of dreadful wrath,
And shot devouring flame,
Our God appear'd consuming fire,
And Vengeance was his name.

Rich were the drops of Jesus' blood,
That calm'd his frowning face,
That sprinkled o'er the burning throne,
And turn'd the wrath to grace.

In this manner, it is supposed, divine justice was satisfied. God became reconciled to the world, his wrath was turned into grace, and he can now, consistently with the honor of his law, and the dignity of his character, extend mercy and pardon to the penitent sinner. A *vicarious* sacrifice having been made in behalf of the world, the sovereign judge relaxed his severity, and was so far pacified as to accept the offering. And notwithstanding mankind were *wicked*, and

Jesus *just*, the former were *justified*, and the latter was *condemned* to suffer their punishment!

While some believe that all for whom Jesus poured out his soul unto death, are forever acquitted from all guilt (because another has borne all their punishment) and will infallibly attain to the resurrection of the just and the joys of the redeemed in glory; others hold that he gave himself a ransom for all without respect of persons, and thus made it possible for every man to be saved, on certain conditions, with which some will certainly never comply. The former of these opinions was hitherto very generally believed; but the latter is now fast gaining ground and rapidly taking its place. The advocates of both these opinions, however, contend that all men were justly exposed to eternal ruin; and that Christ came and bore the punishment which they deserved, and thus justified the *wicked* by the terrible *condemnation* of the just! And when a question is proposed in relation to the *justice* of God in this supposed procedure, we are gravely certified that Jesus freely consented to bear the punishment of the guilty, and that the claims of justice are fully satisfied, because the penalty of the law has been inflicted!

Reader, Is there any truth in such notions? Are they any more entitled to belief than heathen fables? We wish not to cast reproach upon those who believe such things. But why should we connive at a mere medley of injustice, contradiction, and absurdity, because it is put forth as the greatest beauties and excellencies of Christian doctrine? We have no scheme to promote by an affected belief of any thing that outrages reason and shocks humanity. And while we would refrain from any assaults upon the character of our opposers, we have little patience with gross errors that belong to darker times, and we are very much disposed to speak out plainly, and call things by their right names.

But the reader may desire an expression of the doctrine in question in the language of its believers themselves. The desire is reasonable, and shall be gratified. We feel no disposition to misrepresent this doctrine; and surely it is quite bad enough when presented in the best light in which it has ever appeared. We prefer to use the language of others in stating what they believe. Would that our opposers were thus governed in their attacks upon the faith which we cherish. If we really understood each other, our differences of belief would be materially lessened. The receivers of our doctrine are gene-

rally well acquainted with both sides of the question, having been educated in one faith, and are now believing another; while such as oppose us, are commonly ignorant of the reasons and proofs of our faith.

In the latest and *amended* edition of the Westminster Assembly's Catechism, we find the following article of faith:—"The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and offering of himself, which he through the eternal spirit once offered up unto God, *hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father;* and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those the Father hath given unto him." That is, Christ really suffered the *punishment* that was due to sinful men, effectually liquidated the claims of divine justice against them, restored them to the forfeited love of God, and thus secured their ultimate glory and salvation. The same doctrine is also contained in the Articles of Religion of the Episcopal and of the Methodist Churches, in both of which we find it stated that Christ "truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, *to reconcile his Father to us*, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men."

Hence, it appears, according to the doctrine in question, that Christ was *punished instead* of the sinner; and that by his sufferings and death, vindictive justice was satisfied, and God was rendered propitious to his creatures! "God, in his infinite wisdom, (says Watts) did not think fit to pardon sinful man, without some *compensation* for his broken law; for, 1. If the great Ruler of the world had pardoned the sins of men without any *satisfaction*, then his laws might have seemed not worth the vindicating. 2. Men would have been tempted to persist in their rebellion, and to repeat their old offences. 3. His forms of government among his creatures might have appeared as a matter of little importance. 4. God had a mind to make a very illustrious display of both his justice and of his grace among mankind; on these accounts he would not pardon sin without a *satisfaction*."

Such is the doctrine of atonement, as now held by most professing Christians around us. We have stated it in the very language of its believers, and our statements have been drawn from the highest authority within our reach, and we may add, the highest authority that has ever sanctioned this doctrine. Its utter falsity and dangerous tendency may be shown in a few moments.

A consideration of the character and government of God, in the light of the Scriptures, will go far toward exploding this unreasonable dogma. No truth of the Bible is more clearly expressed, than that God will by no means clear the guilty, but will render unto every man according to his deeds. We need not specify chapter and verse to prove this fact, for it is generally admitted, and none doubt that it appears prominently both in the Old and in the New Testaments.

But we now ask, if the *guilty* are not *cleared*, and the *wicked justified*, when deserved punishment is removed from them, and inflicted upon the innocent and just in their stead? And is not the principle here involved pronounced an "abomination to the Lord?" And shall we charge God with practicing himself that which is unjust and hateful in his creatures? It will avail nothing to assert that Jesus voluntarily incurred the penalty which was our due. Allowing the statement to be true, the same character is still imputed to God. He is represented as seeking vengeance to *compensate* his broken law, without caring whether it fell upon the guilty or the innocent. His justice required the infliction of a certain amount of punishment, no matter who might be the sufferer. And God is

declared to have been well satisfied, and reconciled to man, not because he rendered unto his creatures according to their works, and thus executed righteousness and justice; but because he inflicted that punishment which none but the guilty could deserve, upon an innocent person! And all this, we are told, was done, that God might "*make a very illustrious display of both his* JUSTICE *and of his grace!*"

Suppose the Judge of a Court should make such an illustrious display of his *justice*, and exonerate the foul culprit from all guilt, and inflict the punishment which he alone deserves, upon a peaceful, virtuous, and innocent citizen. Who would be so vile—so lost to all sense of equity and right, as to pronounce such conduct an illustrious display of *justice* and of grace? To attribute such procedure to Him whose throne is built upon righteousness and judgment, and who abominates the justification of the wicked and the condemnation of the just, is alike preposterous and shocking to all the moral sensibilities of our nature!

Again, the doctrine under consideration detracts from the loveliness of the Divinity, and ascribes to Jesus Christ far greater benevolence than his Father. It maintains that God was inflexible in his determination to smite the human

race with a deadly curse, and consign them *en masse* to interminable ruin; but that Jesus, overpowered with compassion, flew upon the wings of love to interpose between an offended Judge and guilty man, and received the fatal blow upon his own innocent head! Jesus was all tenderness and mercy; but God must be *reconciled to us*, before he would grant any pardon; and "it is here alone, (says Watts,) that we can find the solid principle of reconciliation to an *offended God*." The Father was angry, and disposed to injure; but the Son removed his wrath, turned it into grace, and caused him to exercise pity!

If, then, God was offended and meant to do us harm, and Jesus came to appease his wrath, and procure for us his pardoning mercy, Jesus was certainly better disposed toward the human race than was his Father. And in view of such a notion, to say that the Father and the Son are, after all, but one Being in reality, though existing in different persons; and that they equally loved mankind, notwithstanding the former was filled with burning indignation against us, is a jargon of mysticism and absurdity, that we are unable to understand! Whatever may be said in denial of the fact, the doctrine before us does represent Jesus as far more lenient and merciful

than his Father. And this fact alone is sufficient to show that the doctrine is unscriptural and without foundation in truth. In all his instructions, Jesus never gave a hint that has come down to us, that he came into the world to save men from the wrath of his Father, by suffering the punishment which was their due, or by any other *means*. But he invariably taught that *God loved the world*, and that he came to do the will of God.

Again, The moral precepts of the gospel require us to be *imitators* of God, and be perfect, *even* as he is perfect. But who does not perceive that an *imitation* of his character according to the doctrine now under consideration, would entirely violate all righteousness and justice, and subject the innocent to the punishment of the guilty? Let the believer in this doctrine *exemplify* it in his family, and in his intercourse among men. If he has ten children, and nine of them are vile and graceless wretches, and the other a virtuous and obedient child, let him vindicate the honor of the parental law, and make an *illustrious display of his justice*, by inflicting all the punishment due to the rebels, upon his dutiful and unoffending child! True, he must first obtain the *consent* of his innocent

child, and then he will show his faith by his works, and make an illustrious display of justice and grace!

Can such a doctrine be *practiced* among men, and carried out into all the concerns of life, and produce the fruits of righteousness required of the Christian disciple? It surely cannot. And we think it high time that all such notions were set aside, and others introduced that shall be more compatible with the spirit of justice, and better calculated to promote the morality of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The doctrine of atonement is very plainly taught in the Scriptures; and it there appears consistent with reason, truth and justice. In directing our minds to that source of knowledge, we find nothing said of Christ's expiring upon the cross to placate the vengeance of his Father, and to reconcile him to man. But we are plainly certified that God *commended his love toward us*, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Romans, v. 8. Jesus came not to save man from the just *punishment* of his sins; for the New Testament, as well as the Old, declares that God will by *no means* clear the guilty, but render unto every man according to his deeds. But he came to reconcile the world unto God, and to deliver us from the *service* of

sin, that we might no longer suffer its unhappy effects. And although he *suffered* for us, or in our behalf, we nowhere read that he was ever *punished*, and much less that he devised *some means* by which to clear the guilty. The innocent may *suffer* in behalf of the guilty, but none except the guilty can be *punished*. Our fathers suffered for their country, to obtain blessings which we now enjoy; but they were not punished in our stead. Jesus also suffered for us in the flesh, the just for the unjust; but he was never the victim of punishment. Though "he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," he suffered no *penalty*. And though he "gave himself a ransom for all," it was not to reconcile God to man, but the world to God.

The word *katallage*, variously rendered *reconciliation* and *atonement* in the New Testament, means a restoration to peace, union and concord, where enmity had before existed. But it should be understood that this word is translated *atonement* but once in all the New Testament; and even in that place all will allow that it should be *reconciliation*. The particular passage to which we refer, is Romans v. ii., "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *atonement*"—the marginal reading is *recon-*

ciliation. But the received version is quite unexceptionable, provided the word *atonement* be understood according to its true meaning. Calmet says, "We have evidently lost the true import of this word, by our present manner of pronouncing it. When it was customary to pronounce the word *one* as *own* (as in the time of our translators) the word *atonement* was resolvable into its parts, AT-ONE-MENT, or the means of being *at one*, i. e. reconciled, united, combined in fellowship." Such is plainly the meaning of *atonement.* And thus viewed, it is seen to be entirely synonymous with *reconciliation.*

Now the supposition that the work of atonement was all *completed* by the one offering of Jesus Christ upon the cross, and that he died to *satisfy* divine justice, and reconcile his Father to us, is certainly at variance with Scripture and truth. In the dying cry, "It is finished," he knew that he had drank the bitter cup of death, and that his sufferings were ended. But his death, so far from *completing* the work of *atonement*, was only one of the means of reconciliation, and no more essential to the accomplishment of that work, than was his resurrection from the dead. Hence Paul says of Jesus, Rom. iv. 25, "Who was delivered for our offences, *and was raised again for our justification.*"

Is it not plain from this passage that our *justification* unto life depends as much upon the *resurrection* as upon the *death* of Christ? No person will question the fact that justification is included in the work of atonement. And if this work was all *completed* by the sufferings of the cross, why should it be affirmed that he "was *raised* again for our justification?"

After speaking at considerable length of the *death* of Christ, Paul says, 1st Cor. xv. 14, "And if Christ be not *risen*, then is our preaching *vain*." Although Jesus had offered himself upon the cross and endured the sufferings of death, all was *vain*, and the gospel of none effect, if he was not *risen* from the dead. His death was not sufficient: for we receive the assurance of final justification unto life through his *resurrection*. *Reconciliation* is a *progressive* work, and all the labors and sufferings of Jesus are but *means* to its accomplishment. He has undertaken to reconcile, not God unto the world —for God never needed to be reconciled—but the world unto God. And the work will be fully consummated when all things are reconciled to God, and every knee bows, and every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!

The subject of atonement or reconciliation, as well as the extent of the work, is most clearly exhibited in the following testimonies of Scripture. "All things are of God, who hath *reconciled* us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of *reconciliation;* to wit, that God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto himself*, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2d Cor. v. 18, 19. "For it pleased the Father that in him (Christ) should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to *reconcile all things unto himself*, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." Col. i. 19, 20. It was the purpose of God to reconcile sinful and suffering man to himself; and he appointed his Son, whom he has exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, to effect this gracious work. Jesus received a name which is above every name, and was invested with all power in heaven and earth, that he might be enabled successfully to prosecute and complete this merciful reconciliation. The sins of the world will not be *so* imputed to man, as to render the work ineffectual. And although it is not yet finished, the promise of Him who cannot lie, has been

given, that he shall prosper in the undertaking, and at last see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied.

It is a mistake to suppose that Jesus Christ died to *purchase* divine mercy for the sinner, or to turn the wrath of God into grace. His death was a manifestation of divine favor and compassion in behalf of the world. He died to abolish the whole law of sacrifices, and to open unto man a new and living way of constant access to the Father of mercies. And he arose from the dead to bring life and immortality to light; to give us the sure pledge of our resurrection; and to impart to us the full assurance of faith and of hope, that we shall through him, in the better world be *reconciled*, united, and combined in fellowship to his Father and our Father, his God and our God.

And it is also an error to suppose that the entire work of atonement was finished in the mere death of our Lord and Savior. It is indeed consummated in the purpose of God, and was before the world began; but it is not yet actually accomplished. Nay, the work is now prosecuted no farther than men have really become reconciled to God. It is still in progress; and when it shall be completed, "the whole family in heaven and earth," shall be gathered into one

fold—the subjects of the resurrection shall be equal unto the angels—and God shall be all in all! Nothing will be left imperfect—nothing will fail of all that God has promised—but the whole world will be reconciled to the owner of all souls, and "the Savior of all men."

"Thou hast (says Paul) put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he hath put all things in subjection under him, he left *nothing* that is not put under him. But now we *see not yet* all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 8, 9. We "*see not yet*" the end, "but believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." We trust that God will be glorified in all his works; and we hope, without doubting, that every man will finally reach his "*chief and highest end*," which is to "*glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever.*"

CHAPTER XI.

REPENTANCE.

We are sometimes accused of not preaching repentance and forgiveness; and on this ground we have been denied the *evangelical* name and character. The accuser, however, is mistaken. These things run through all our public ministrations of divine truth; and we cease not to exhort men to exercise repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, with the assurance of remission of sins to all who turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart. But it must be confessed that we do not handle these subjects after the manner adopted by many of our Christian brethren. We have different views of human nature, and of the proper instrumentalities to reclaim men from vice and destruction. We apply different means, and appeal to other motives of the heart. And in the way which we judge to be right, we constantly teach and enforce the very things, which others suppose that we utterly discard. But the misunderstanding originates with themselves. They claim to preach

the doctrines in question just as they are taught in the Scriptures; and hence suppose that all who differ from them must consequently be at variance with the instructions of the divine word. But they would soon perceive the injustice of their charge against us, if they would only consider that a different manner of preaching the same doctrine, does not necessarily imply that either party denies and rejects such doctrine. We should not feel justified in accusing others of failing to preach salvation, because they view this subject in a somewhat different light from that in which it appears to our own minds. And we feel unwilling to be accused ourselves on any such grounds.

All who profess to be Christians, of every name, preach repentance and forgiveness. And it is no mark of a just and charitable spirit for one denomination to charge any other with a denial of, or a failure to proclaim, these important doctrines of the Gospel. If any suppose that our views on these subjects are erroneous, or that we are unfaithful in urging them upon the attention of sinful men; let them candidly state what we believe, and fairly expose our errors; and let them also reprove our negligence of duty. We claim no infallibility of belief, nor blamelessness of practice. And we hope to for-

sake our errors when they are made known; and also to profit by friendly admonitions to more faithfulness in the cause of our Master. But unfounded accusations against us, neither tend to enlighten our understandings and correct us in righteousness, nor to impress our minds with very favorable opinions of the character of the accuser.

No subject within the whole range of Christian theology is more frequently made the theme of discourse than *repentance*; and perhaps upon no other is so much said with little understanding. The word itself seems to be freely used by common consent, without sufficiently considering its true and scriptural import. But there is reason to believe that if it be constantly repeated with great warmth of feeling and earnestness of manner, many will at once conclude that the preaching must be highly evangelical in its character, and of the most desirable tendency. And it is quite possible that some persons rest satisfied with the mere sound of the word, without caring to seek for the real sense intended Because we do not perpetually reiterate this word, is one great reason why superficial thinkers, who regard sound more than sense, charge us with not preaching repentance.

Like many other theological terms, *repentance* is used in a vague and indefinite sense, and in accordance with established opinion and general prejudice. And the same is true of "born again," "regenerated," "converted," etc. These several expressions are all used now-a-days to express the same general idea; but the thing signified, though most people suppose they understand it, is not easily explained. There is a darkness and mystery about the common acceptation of these terms. And the operation and change supposed to be effected in the mind by *repentance*, are so badly defined and imperfectly understood, that common prejudice and the confirmed habits of thought with the people, are made to determine the meaning intended, if indeed real *meaning* be considered.

Now we are willing to admit that there are subjects embraced in the Christian revelation, which appear not to be clearly explained in all respects, and concerning which there must consequently be some indefiniteness in the mind of the believer. For instance, the precise time when all the dead shall be raised, and the kingdom of Christ shall be delivered up to his Father, is not really stated; and in reflecting upon this particular topic, it is not strange that we should form various opinions that will not admit of satisfactory explanation and proof. The same

may be said of the mode of our existence beyond death, and of the employment of man in the future state of being. But *repentance* is a thing that immediately affects our interests and happiness, and there need be no diversity of opinion concerning what it means. It seems to be embraced in the very first principles or rudiments of the gospel of Christ. And we regard it as one of the most simple subjects, and the most easily understood, of any presented for our acceptance and belief in the word of God. In our view it signifies no mysterious operation of mind—no supernatural change of human nature —but is all embraced in the simple word, *reformation*. We do not mean that every change in man for the better, should be considered repentance in the fullest and highest sense of the word. The gospel of Christ requires something more than the cold morality of heathenism; and the repentance which he preached was far different from any reformation of life ever proposed by the sages and moralists of the world. But gospel repentance is still a very plain subject—the means by which it is produced are easily understood—and the happy effects which it yields are felt and enjoyed by every true-hearted Christian.

It should, however, be understood in the outset, that there are two words of very different signification, uniformly rendered *repent* in the common version of the New Testament—*metanoeo* and *metamelomia*. Of these words Dr. Campbell says, 6th Pre. Diss. part 3d, "It has been observed by some, and I think with reason, that the former properly denotes a change for the better; the latter barely a change, whether it be to the better or to the worse; that the former marks a change of mind that is durable and productive of consequences; the latter expresses only a present uneasy feeling of regret and sorrow for what is done, without regard either to duration or to effects; in fine, that the first may properly be translated into English, I *reform;* the second, I *repent*, in the familiar acceptation of the word." The same author again says, in the same Dissertation, "Every one who reforms, *repents;* but every one who repents, does not *reform*."

A reference to a few passages will sufficiently explain the real difference of meaning between the two words in question. Paul says, 2 Cor. vii. 10, "For godly sorrow worketh *repentance* to salvation not to be *repented* of." Here we find in the common version the word repentance first used to signify a genuine reformation of heart and life; and afterwards the same word is

employed to show that such reformation need not be repented of, regretted, or changed. The words here used are different in the original text; and their real dissimilarity of meaning is made obvious from the very construction of the passage. Godly sorrow produces a desirable change, that is well expressed by the word *reformation*. It would, however, be absurd to say that such a change is not to be *reformed;* but all can understand that it need not be *repented* of, or *regretted*.

When John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, he called upon men to *reform*. But when Paul said, Rom. xi. 29, "For the gifts and callings of God are without *repentance*," he had not allusion to any reformation of life, or to any kind of change in man. He meant merely to assert the fact, that the gifts and callings of God are *irrevocable*, that is, not to be changed or reversed, and not to be repented of. The same sense of the word repentance also occurs in the passage relating to Esau, Heb. xii. 17, "For he found no place of *repentance*, though he sought it carefully with tears." It was not personal reformation of character that this man sought, but a mere *change* or revocation of what had taken place. "This change

was what he found no possibility of effecting, however earnestly or movingly he sought it."

We now use the word *repentance*, not according to the sense which it bears as applied to the *change* that Esau desired to effect; but as it was employed by our Savior and his apostles in their constant and earnest calls upon men to forsake their sins and *reform* their lives. Both the harbinger of Jesus and the Master himself commenced their public ministry in the world, with the emphatic command for men to repent, because the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and about to be established in the earth. They would have deluded and sinful men turn from their follies and vices, give a listening ear and an understanding heart, and thus be restored to the wisdom of the just and the joys of obedience to God. The repentance which they preached was reformation—a turning from vanity to the counsels of wisdom, and from the service of sin to the love and practice of godliness and virtue. But it implied no mysterious and undefinable emotions of soul—no miraculous transformation of human nature—but the call was obeyed, and the fruits of genuine repentance brought forth and enjoyed, when men were induced by the influence of good principles to break off their

sins by righteousness, and their iniquity by turning to the Lord.

The work of repentance which our Savior and his apostles labored to produce in those to whom they ministered, was of a somewhat different character from that which we now strive to effect. At least it was intended to be more deep, thorough and radical than any change that is really necessary in the sphere of our labors. They did not preach a religion in which the people had been educated, and seek to revive in their minds a recollection of the lessons of duty received in childhood. They endeavored to break up the very foundations of existing society; and to introduce not only a new code of morals, but also to establish a new and better dispensation of religion. They required men to forsake all that they had been taught and possessed—to begin life again as new-born infants—to be transformed in the spirit of their minds—and to walk in newness of life.

The world was wedded to false doctrines, and rendered miserable by the practice and influence of corrupt principles. It was the business of the Baptist to call men away from their follies and sins; and it was the object of the greater teacher and the chosen ambassadors of his truth to give them spiritual birth into the heavenly

kingdom. John prepared the way; and Christ led forth the captive from bondage, and conducted the wandering into the paths of wisdom and peace. And so great was the change wrought by the ministry of truth, that such as received the gospel and were made subject to its influence, were represented as having died in one state, and been made alive in another. "Wherefore, my brethren, (says Paul to the Romans,) ye also are become *dead* to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The same change cannot be produced in any man who has been educated a Christian. In such a case it is not necessary that the individual should leave all that he has been taught; but he should rather be made sensible of his early lessons, and reminded of the good counsels which he has rejected.

But though we live in a Christian community, where the gospel is taught even to children, and blended with common education, it is no less important that men should repent and receive the remission of sins *now*, than it was when Jesus lived on earth. The same change in all respects cannot be effected; but the time has never been known in the world when *repentance*

was unnecessary to man. The best of men are sinners against God, and subject to faults that need correction. And surely when we cast our eyes over society, and behold the prevalence of sin, and its dreadful consequences, we cannot suppose that repentance has yet done its work. There is among us a fearful disregard of God. His name is blasphemed in the streets, and vice walks abroad at noonday unrebuked. Intemperance, avarice, and selfish ambition have almost become the ruling powers of our country. And these dangerous evils, and others less alarming, have spread their poisonous influence throughout all the ramifications of society, so that there are none among us that rightly fear God and faithfully keep his commandments. Privileges have been abused and mercies despised, until as a people and as individuals we stand condemned in the sight of righteous heaven for our mean progress in religious knowledge and reformation.

What must be done to promote the necessary work of repentance? Men must be brought to see the evil of their doings, and to understand the excellency of that Being against whom they have inconsiderately transgressed. Apprehensions of danger from sin, and the sorrow of mind thus produced, can lead to no worthy and solid

reformation of life. Man may mourn over past transgressions, and tremble in view of future consequences, and still experience in his soul no deep and salutary change. His outward conduct may seem more accordant to the requisitions of the Gospel, but the principles within are still the same; and "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts," still lives and rules. But let the real evil and malignant nature of sin be seen and felt; let it be known that the law to which God commands obedience "is holy, just and good;" and let the mind be brought to loathe the wrong and to love the right, and man's repentance will be sincere, effectual, and lasting in its happy effects. Such is the repentance which the gospel aims to promote. It presents "*the goodness of God*" as the foundation of reformation; and urges an imitation of the divine rectitude and benevolence as the only acceptable course of life. And when men behold the beauty and excellency of goodness as displayed in the God of Love, they will realize the unspeakable importance of conformity to his character, and delight in his law "after the inner man."

Mr. Shinn, of the Methodist Church, truly and eloquently says, in his late work "On the Benevolence and Rectitude of the Supreme Be-

ing," "The essential character of God is a subject of primary importance to the whole intelligent universe. On this depends the *reformation* of the sinner, the perseverance of the saint, the consolation of the afflicted and dying, and the perpetual tranquillity of all the hosts of heaven. A sinner may be terrified by mere apprehensions of punishment; but a true and sentimental repentance will never take place in his mind, nor a genuine reformation in his life, till he shall have some tolerably correct views concerning the excellency of the Divine nature. The *goodness* of God must lead him to repentance. For it is opposition to a good Being, and to a good law which has rendered his own character a *bad* one. This evil of his heart and life, the penitent honestly acknowledges; which implies a full admission in his intelligence, that the Being against whom he has been standing in opposition, is as *excellent* as he is himself *vile*. Without such a conviction, there can be no sentimental repentance; and if repentance be not *sentimental*, how can it be *sincere?* pp. 11, 12.

Never have we heard any thing more pertinent and sensible on the subject of repentance. Our own views of the subject are here clearly and fully expressed. And the desire of our heart and the object of our constant labors in the cause

of Christ, is, to exhibit that divine goodness, which Paul declares, "*leadeth to repentance*," to show the hateful nature and unhappy consequences of opposition to this goodness—and thus to lead men away from folly and sin into the wisdom and obedience of the Christian character. In this way we cease not to preach repentance. The whole course of our ministry tends to promote the work of reformation. And in proportion as men are brought to see their own vileness in contrast with the goodness of God, they will abhor themselves, and strive to become god-like in feeling and practice. "Opposition to a good Being" is thus removed—God's *excellency* appears glorious and lovely, and man's *vileness* more and more abominable—the heart and affections are enlisted—and "sentimental repentance" and "genuine reformation" of life follow as the happy and permanent result.

In this view of the subject it is easily perceived that the word repentance may be loudly and frequently reiterated, without the actual preaching of gospel repentance. And it is also plain to be seen that this important doctrine of our holy religion, may be zealously and effectively proclaimed, without so much as using the word by which it is commonly expressed. Terrifying sinners "by mere apprehensions of

punishment," is not preaching repentance. And although great apparent effects may be produced by such means, and men may thus be measurably restrained from open acts of transgression, no man can be led to repent as God requires, by any such ministrations. John the Baptist and our Savior exhorted men to repent, because the *kingdom of heaven*, which manifests the favor and love of God, was at hand. Peter urged the Jews to the same duty, by the assurance that the promise of God was to them and to their children, and that they were all embraced in that covenant of redemption, which proposes to turn away every man from his iniquities. See Acts 3. And Paul is no less explicit in his instructions on this subject, in thus reproving man's sinful perverseness and blind "opposition to a good Being:"—"Or despisest thou *the riches of his goodness*, and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that *the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*" Rom. ii. 4.

In like manner we judge it right to preach repentance. We are not concerned to produce "only a present uneasy feeling of regret or sorrow for what is done," but we would strive to effect "a change of mind that is durable and productive of consequences." And we humbly trust that our feeble labors in some measure pro-

duce this desirable result. We know that acceptable obedience must spring from love; and we are sure that God must be seen in the loveliness of his character, before he can be loved with all the soul. And hence our constant exhibitions of the supreme excellency of the Divine goodness. We know that the evil of sin must be seen and felt before it can be abhorred in the mind. And we cease not to declare and to prove that vice is the parent and cause of misery, the destroyer of peace, and the enemy of all happiness. We know that the commandments of God "are not grievous," 1st John, v. 3, and that "*in* keeping of them *there is a great reward.*" Ps. xix. 11. And we therefore labor to convince men that God requires of us a "rea sonable service," intended for our own good; and that peace and pure enjoyment can be found only in the path of obedience. Thus we constantly preach repentance. And if the Scripture truths here presented, were but believed *with the heart*, by all who profess to know and serve the Lord, Zion would appear in all her beautiful garments, and every waste place in the kingdom of Immanuel would become rich in the fruits of holiness and peace.

CHAPTER XII.

FORGIVENESS.

We come to speak of *forgiveness*. The Prince of life, who was exalted with the right hand of God, was to give remission of sins, as well as grant repentance unto life. But we maintain that God never swerves from strict justice in his dealings with mankind, but certainly renders unto all the full recompense of their doings. Many are ready to conclude that such doctrine precludes the very possibility of any *forgiveness*, because, say they, if all sinners are punished to the full extent of their guilt, there can be no room for the exercise of pardoning mercy. We confess that this objection is highly plausible; and, considering the more common religious instructions of the day, we think it not strange that many should regard it as unanswerable.

But our appeal is to the word of God. We have no concern with the judicial pardons that are extended to the transgressors of human laws. Such is not the subject of inquiry. We desire

to show what kind of forgiveness God grants to sinful men, and to ascertain whether he remits the *punishment* demanded by justice, or merely forgives the *sins* of his creatures.

The Scriptures speak a language on this subject that need not be misunderstood. In the same passage we find the declaration of full and adequate *punishment*, and also of abundant *pardon*—thus showing that the same individual may receive for "every trangression and disobedience a just recompense of reward," and at the same time receive the forgiveness of all his sins. Let a few such passages be introduced, and they will assist us to a right understanding of the subject before us. Exodus xxxiv. 6, 7. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, *forgiving* iniquity, and transgression and sin, *and that will by no means clear the guilty*." Here it is plainly affirmed that God is *forgiving;* and also that he will not, by any possible means, or in any case, suffer the guilty to be cleared. Shall we say that there is here a manifest contradiction? If forgiveness, as applied to God and in the Scripture sense of the word, means a remission of condign punishment, there was never a more gross and palpable solecism than we find in this passage. But

we deny that such is the meaning of forgiveness. And we shall yet show that the most rigid justice and free pardon harmoniously work together in the economy of God.

Again, we read, Psalms xcix. 8, "Thou wast a God that *forgavest* them, thou tookest *vengeance* of their inventions." The Psalmist speaks of God's treatment of Israel in the days of Moses and Aaron, and shows that notwithstanding he *punished* that rebellious people for their wickedness, he also *forgave* them. But a still stronger passage is found in the 40th chapter of Isaiah. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and say unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is *pardoned: for* she hath received of the Lord's hand *double for all her sins.*" All the sins of Jerusalem are here mentioned. They were all punished to the full; and to give peculiar force to the fact, the Prophet introduces a *hyperbole*, declaring that she had received *double for all her sins!* Surely there was no limitation of the operations of justice in this case—no remission of the punishment deserved by sin. Still the people were *pardoned*—their sins were all *forgiven.*

"How then," says one, "shall we understand this subject of forgiveness, for everything like

real *pardon* seems to be excluded." We answer, earthly rulers remit *punishment*, because their judicial dicisions are not infallible, and such procedure is in some cases supposed to be proper and even necessary. The work of God is perfect, and his judgments never need to be reversed. And the fact is worthy of particular notice, that although we read in the Scriptures of the forgiveness, pardon and remission of *sins*, *transgression* and *iniquity*, we do not find a passage in the whole Book that speaks of the forgiveness or remission of *punishment*. In two of the passages which we have cited, it is positively declared that the *punishment* was inflicted, but *sin pardoned*. After the transgressors had suffered the righteous chastisement of their evil deeds, they were received into the favor of God and graciously *forgiven*.

The word *aphiemi*, rendered *forgive* in the New Testament, is defined by Parkhurst, Donnegan, and Greenfield, and we presume by all other lexicographers, to mean, "to send away, dismiss, to emit, send forth." *Remission*, which signifies sending away, is more expressive of the meaning intended than the word *forgiveness*. God will by no means clear the guilty. But when man truly repents of his sins, that is, reforms his life as the Scriptures require, God will

pardon or remit all his iniquities, and treat him as though he had never sinned. In this consists the forgiveness or remission that is promised the penitent. God punished Jerusalem for *all her sins;* but when the warfare was accomplished, the word of comfort was spoken, and her iniquity was *pardoned.* It has been said that if man is punished to the full extent of his guilt, he may come forth and demand the favor of God and even the bliss of heaven as his *right.* But upon what ground? "Because," says one, "he has suffered all that he deserved." Very well, this settles the account, but what *claim* does all this give man to further blessings from God? Surely none at all. He stands as the subject of grace, and whatever good he receives must be the merciful *gift* of "the Father of lights."

The justice of God claims the obedience of all the subjects of his moral government, and employs such means as tend to secure this end. All punishments inflicted by the hand of the Deity are intended by him to be the means of satisfying the demands of his own justice. And after punishment has done its work, and repentance unto life has ensued, God blots out from the book of his remembrance all the faults of the sinner, sends away his iniquities, and receives him as one who had never known the ways of evil.—

The prodigal son bitterly suffered the consequences of his follies and crimes, and feared to ask the forgiveness which his father delighted to bestow. In this case there would have been no forgiveness, if the father had been unwilling to remit and forget the former transgressions of his child. But he forgave all—welcomed the returning prodigal to his home—and rejoiced over him more than over the elder brother who had not gone astray.

All sinners are prodigals from God. While estranged from him by wicked works, they must ever bear that punishment of which the guilty cannot be cleared. But the disposition of God toward them is subject to no change—he still loves them with a parent's affection—and when by the manifestations of his goodness, they are led to *repentance*, sin is not imputed, but abundant pardon is granted. "God (says Paul, 2d Cor. v. 19,) was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, *not imputing their trespasses unto them.*" Notwithstanding the sinfulness of men, they were still the objects of divine love. And although they must suffer the unavoidable consequences of their wickedness, God will not allow either sin or its effects to hinder the great work of universal reconciliation to himself. Because man has sinned, God will not therefore fasten

sin and misery eternally upon him. His purposes are all favorable to human happiness, and aim at the ultimate blessedness of all his moral subjects. Nothing can separate man from his love, nor make him the absolute enemy of any of his creatures. The principles of his nature and government will not allow the return of evil for evil. The exercise of his justice (which is that of love) is designed to secure him the obedience of his creatures, and bring man into communion with his Maker. And when the ends of justice are secured, man will no longer be the subject of penal retribution. Whatever he has done amiss will be kindly forgiven; and in Christ Jesus all that have sinned will at last find the blessings of grace, and the joys of deliverance from every evil! Then shall ungodliness be turned away from Jacob, and the sins of Israel *taken away*, Rom. xi, 26, 27; and then shall it be known and acknowledged of all, that Jesus Christ is indeed "THE LAMB OF GOD WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!"

CHAPTER XIII.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

All Christians yield a willing assent to the doctrine of human accountability; notwithstanding many of them hold notions that seem to be quite irreconcilable with this plain doctrine of reason and of revelation. The Calvinist, the Necessarian, nay, even the Fatalist will not deny the responsibility of man. Who ever urged man to the performance of his duty toward God with more earnestness and zeal than Dr. Priestly? And yet he believed that every thing in the world is controlled and determined by a philosophical and irresistable necessity. The charge of an utter denial of all accountability in man was indeed warmly and repeatedly preferred against him by his adversaries; but nothing of the kind was ever asserted by himself. We shall attempt no defence of his peculiar notions on this subject; but we are willing to award him honesty and sincerity of heart in the avowal of his belief. And we think his case fully proves

the utter impossibility of entirely divesting the mind of all feelings of responsibility to God. No theory can effectually destroy this feeling; for it seems to form a part of our common nature; though it must be admitted that it may be greatly weakened and sadly perverted by the pernicious influence of false and corrupt doctrines. And we are impressed with the belief that the doctrine of philosophical necessity, as taught by Dr. Priestly, is not true, and therefore not well adapted to the promotion of virtue and righteousness. Still it would be an act of gross injustice to charge him with a negation of man's accountability to his Maker.

But though all christians freely admit the abstract doctrine that man is an accountable being, we find that very dissimilar notions are entertained in regard to this subject. We believe that whatever freedom man may possess, and however responsible he may be for his conduct, God is the sovereign ruler and final disposer of all things. We hold that man's ultimate destiny, instead of being a thing of *uncertainty*, was determined in the counsels of Heaven before the handy work of creation was begun. The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, being *slain from the foundation of the world*, the work of human redemption and its final and

glorious consummation, were seen and known to the mind of God, ere the pillars of the earth were reared, and the breath of life breathed into man! And while we fully believe that man is an accountable creature, and that God "will render unto every man according to his deeds," we hold that the consequences of our actions can in no case extend so far as to *defeat* the original designs of our Maker, or alter the nature of that ultimate destiny for which he always intended us.

Others, however, make human responsibility infinite in magnitude, and extend it throughout the ceaseless duration of eternity. And they suppose that the actions here done, and the character here formed, will have the most important bearing upon our state and condition so long as existence in any form is continued, and will in fact determine our *ultimate* happiness or misery. One great point of difference between us relates, therefore, not to the existence of accountability in man, (for this doctrine is admitted by all,) but to the *extent* of our responsibility.

We have been, and still are, charged with an utter denial of all responsibility in man. This charge, however, is unfounded—we will not pronounce it slanderous, for we are well persuaded that in most cases at least it originates in an en-

tire misunderstanding of our real views on this subject. Our accusers would be enabled to speak more understandingly in reference to this matter, if they would only acquaint themselves with the fact, that we believe as firmly as they do, in the *fact* that man is accountable to his Maker; and that the point of difference between us relates merely to the magnitude and *extent* of this accountability. The idea appears to us tremendous and appalling, that man's ENDLESS happiness or misery should in any way depend upon his own fitful doings, or upon the character which he himself voluntarily forms in this transitory state of existence. We believe that man is limited in all his powers and capacities—that the consequences of all his actions are *finite* in their nature and duration—and that his final and immortal destiny can be determined by no other than HIM "*who only hath immortality.*" However lasting, whether happy or miserable, the effects of our conduct may be, we believe that our ultimate and permanent existence in the resurrection state, will have no connexion with either reward or punishment, but will be *the free gift* to all our race of the unpurchased grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord!

In view of the foregoing considerations, it seems proper that we should inquire concerning

what God requires of man. The requisitions of the divine law as declared in the Scriptures, are all comprised in two great commandments, which obligate us to love God with all the heart, and our neighbor as ourselves. But in considering this subject we should not rest satisfied with a bare repetition of the word *love*. The duties required of us are indeed expressed by this word; but the true test and fruits of our love must be exhibited in acts of obedience to its requisitions. To love God with all the soul, implies that we are faithful to the full extent of our knowledge and ability, in the performance of such services as he has required at our hands. It implies that we are sincere and honest in our intentions, obedient to the best motives that are presented to the mind, and disposed in all things to employ our means and exert our powers according to our best convictions of right and duty. The man who thus acts, whatever may be the measure of his capacity, and his opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, is a true lover of God, and a faithful doer of the law of righteousness. "For (says the apostle Paul) if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." 2d Cor. viii. 12.

To love our neighbor as ourselves, implies

that we are disposed to respect his rights and to promote his happiness; or in other words, that we do unto him as we desire that he should do unto us. We are bound to make the best use of all our means of instruction, and to seek an acquaintance with all the obligations which we owe to our kindred race. And in every stage of knowledge, and with every grade of ability, we are obedient to the second command, and stand justified in the view of God, when we render our neighbor the best services in our power. The heathen, as well as the Christian, may work righteousness. And if he is but faithful to the light within, and obedient to the best instructions that can be obtained, that Being who is "no respecter of persons," will approve his conduct and bless him in his deeds!

"To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God," are declared to comprise all the duties that our Maker requires of man These duties are urged in a variety of ways in the Scriptures, and presented in every form of expression; but they are still the same. Justice to man, and mercy to the erring and suffering, and humble obedience toward God according to our knowledge of what he requires, make up the whole sum of every man's duty. We are all and constantly obligated to render such obedience

to the law of God, whether that law be learned by the testimony of natural conscience, or made known by the spirit of revelation. The Bible is our code of morals, and the highest guide of our lives. And though every part of its instructions may not be easily comprehended, no man of ordinary capacity need fail to understand the simple duties which it requires. And our obedience is fully rendered, when we govern our feelings and thoughts and actions, according to the standard of rectitude, mercy and humility furnished in the word of God.

Let us furthermore inquire, what recompense is conferred upon man for his obedience to the things which God has commanded? Does the reward bear any intimate and immediate connexion to duty? Or will it be rendered after the last duty of life shall have been performed? Answers to these queries may be drawn from two sources—the Scriptures and our own experience. The apostle James says, 1, 25, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed *in his deed.*" The Psalmist expressed the same sentiment, when he says, speaking of the divine commandments, "*In keeping* of them there is great reward," Ps. xix. 11. And again, he says,

"Great peace *have* they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Ps. cxix. 65. These are but a small specimen of the passages that might be cited to prove that the recompense of virtue and righteousness, is ever present with, and enjoyed by the man who walks in the ways of divine wisdom, which *are* pleasantness and peace.

The Scriptures give us no intimation that the reward of our good deeds here will be conferred upon us in another world. Nor do they instruct us to believe that our enjoyment of the reward will depend upon our feelings and character just when we breathe the last mortal breath, and close our eyes in death! But they declare that *in the way* of duty there are peace and joy, and great recompense of reward. It is not *for* being obedient to the divine law of love that we are to be blessed of God, as though the recompense were to be rendered *after* all duties have been discharged. But the reward of righteousness, is promised man *while* he sustains a righteous character; and he is blessed IN HIS DEEDS.

And does not our own experience corroborate this plain doctrine of the Scriptures? Who ever withstood the power of temptation, and dealt justly and honorably with his neighbor, without feeling in his soul a sweet consciousness of vir-

tue and innocence, which is a prize more to be desired than all the riches and honors of the world? Who ever had compassion upon the unfortunate, and as a ministering angel of mercy, wiped the tear from sorrow's eye, and poured gladness and joy into the suffering heart, without experiencing in the very act, a recompense, great beyond all expression? And he that daily walks in humility before God, is enabled when he retires to his nightly repose, to reflect with feelings of unutterable satisfaction and delight upon his faithfulness in duty; and his happiness is not only immensely greater, but far more dignified and refined, than any thing ever known by the lover of worldly pleasures. Virtue's prize is "the soul's calm sunshine and the heartfelt joy." All that can minister to the higher powers of our nature—all that can secure happiness that is worthy the dignity of intellectual and moral beings, must flow from the cultivation of those exalted virtues enjoined upon us in the word of God. And we may safely affirm that no man ever rendered true obedience to the great commands of our Maker, without having the witness in himself, assuring him that the doer of the law *is blessed in his deeds.*

It should also be understood that the tendency of righteousness is favorable to all the interests

of human life. Nations and communities, as well as individuals, are rendered truly prosperous and happy only in proportion to their observance of the duties enjoined by the law of God. "Righteousness exalteth a nation;" and the community over which virtue presides is the dwelling-place of happiness and peace. The practice of justice, mercy and humility is in every respect advantageous to man. He thus secures the good will of all his fellows; and even his secular affairs are ordinarily rendered prosperous. And in more ways than we can mention, and to a far greater extent than many have ever conceived, does God judge in the earth, and give a reward to the righteous.

But another inquiry here claims our attention. The Scriptures declare that all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And what are we to understand by sin? The apostle John has furnished the true answer in these words:— "For sin is the transgression of the law." 1st John iii. 4. And it may not be improper to remark that we know of no other sin than that which implies *action*, and results from a violation of law. We hear much said of *original* sin, and *inborn* sin. But it seems to us that if man is born with a bad nature, it is his misfortune, and not his *fault*. Nor can we exactly under-

stand how a man can be a sinner before he has sinned. If "sin is the *transgression* of the law," common understanding would appear to decide that no man can be a sinner until he has *transgressed*. Others, however, profess to know all about this subject; and we leave them to explain its difficulties.

All men are in some way the subjects of law, as we have before shown. One has conscience for his guide, as in the case of the Gentiles of whom Paul speaks, while another has received in addition to his natural sense of right and wrong, the instructions of divine revelation. When we go counter to what we know to be right, from whatever source our knowledge may be derived, we transgress the law, and are therefore sinful. Adam became sinful when he transgressed the command of his Maker. Cain fell into a similar condemnation, when, in violation of all fraternal obligation, he rose up and slew his righteous brother. The people of Israel sinned in disregarding the commands of God given them by Moses, and in thus corrupting their way on the earth. And we now commit sin in forsaking the law which God has instituted for our government, and in doing such things as he has forbidden. All have in some way sinned, and are guilty before God.

What, then, is the punishment which God has denounced against the transgressor? And where shall that punishment be endured? We may here query as we did in regard to the recompense of virtue. Has punishment any necessary connexion with sin itself? Or will it be inflicted after all the sins of life shall have been committed? We are thrown back to the same sources whence we have derived answers to other questions. The Scriptures declare that God executes judgment *in the earth*—that here the righteous are recompensed, and the wicked punished—that the wicked are destitute of peace and rest, and subject to continual troubles—and that *the way of transgressors is hard.* See Ps. lviii. 11; Prov. xi. 31; Isa. lvii. 20, 21; Prov. xiii. 15.

From these representations it plainly appears that man is punished *in his sins*—that suffering and crime are indissolubly united together—and that man must unavoidably endure the recompense of his transgressions, while, and so long as he continues in rebellion against the commands of his Maker. As soon as Adam had transgressed, a change came over his mind; fearful dread seized upon his soul, and he instantly sought to conceal himself from the view of God. The horrors of guilt and the keen stings of a

condemning conscience, were immediately and bitterly felt; and the painful truth was realized that death should come in the very day of transgression. Cain, in view of his enormous offence, and the dreadful retribution to which he was doomed "in the earth," and with no revelations of the future life, was led to exclaim in the bitterness of his grief, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!" The law of Moses denounced punishments for sin only in this world. And in the new and better covenant, which has brought "life and immortality to light," it is declared that in the resurrection state, all who shall have died in Adam shall be made alive in Christ.

We therefore conclude that the punishment for sin is in the same state of being where men transgress the law of God. And we cannot doubt that if men commit sin in the future world, they will there be the subjects of punishment. Solomon says, "Though hand join in hand, the *wicked* shall not be unpunished." Prov. xi. 21. But he also says, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed *in the earth*; *much more* the wicked and the sinner." God has so arranged the affairs of the world, that vice must and will bring with itself an equitable punishment. Many of our sins may be unseen by human eye, and un-

punished by human law ; but they are all known to Him who is acquainted with the secret intentions of our hearts, and he has declared that he will bring every work into judgment, whether good or bad. If one evil action is suffered to pass unpunished, the principle of justice is at once violated in the divine government; and it is folly to talk any longer about the inflexible justice of Jehovah! And if injustice takes place in one instance, it may also occur in another ; and justice in God may be a mere inconstant passion!

But it becomes us to guard against deception, and not suffer ourselves to be enticed into the foolish and hurtful notion that sin can in any case be committed with impunity. The Scriptures are very explicit on this subject. God "*will by no means clear the guilty.*" Exodus xxxvii. 4. "*But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*" Col. iii. 25. And the experience of life teaches the same important and salutary lesson. The sure tendency of vice is to misery and destruction. We always injure our own happiness by wilfully doing that which we know to be wrong. And while we see proofs of the fact that "the way of transgressors is hard," in viewing society at large, and

in studying the whole history of our race, we may come home individually to ourselves, and we shall find overwhelming evidence of the same truth running through our whole experience.

But there is still another inquiry to which we must devote some attention before we close. We have seen that the present life is a state of discipline; and that here both rewards and punishments are administered by the Judge of all the earth. Men may call this life a state of *probation;* but we shall ask in vain for the authority upon which this notion is asserted. *Judgment* is here executed and the recompense of human conduct administered. And if all this means that this life is a state of *probation*, we have no knowledge of the word, and need say no more on the subject.

The subject of our present inquiry is in regard to the ultimate *design* of God in his disciplinary dealings with mankind. What *end* does he mean to accomplish? Will a state of *reward* be the final destiny of any man? Will a state of *punishment* be the ultimate doom of any human soul? Or will discipline at some time cease, and the human family be blessed with redemption, and brought into fellowship with the angels in heaven?

Some persons suppose that God has in view two directly opposite results in his treatment of mankind. They hold that he administers rewards for the purpose of securing the final and endless beatitude of a portion of his creatures; and that their present happiness, though not disregarded, is considered an object of small moment, compared to the last and permanent state of felicity into which their *rewarder* designs to bring them. But they suppose that in punishing the wicked, God intends to produce the very opposite *result*, and will immortalize sin and misery, and give them an endless existence.

According to this doctrine, the government of God aims to accomplish two different ends—the one *good*, and the other *evil*. And he is represented as pursuing such a plan as will infallibly produce these results. Now equitable and righteous governments among men aim to accomplish but one end, which is good. They are never administered for the purpose of producing evil as the final *result*. But every thing human bears the stamp of imperfection; and the wisdom of man is not adequate to the work of establishing a government that shall in all respects and in every instance secure the good designed. We have, however, been accustomed to believe that the work of God is perfect, and that he can

never fail to accomplish the purposes of his will. And if we suppose that his government will produce good and evil results as its *ultimate objects*, the conclusion cannot well be avoided, that it is administered upon the most opposite principles, and is partly *good* and partly *evil*. We read that *the tree is known by its fruit*. The character of a government is determined by the *objects* which it aims to accomplish. And if it designs to produce happy and miserable results, the inference is plain and inevitable that it embraces principles of the most discordant nature!

We believe that the principles of God's government are all of the same nature; and that whatever may be their separate offices, they all aim to accomplish the same benevolent end. We hold that nothing is absolutely eternal save God himself, and that to which he imparts a portion of his own nature. And though he may employ different means for the accomplishment of certain ends, we believe that in every act his ultimate designs are the same. Evils may exist as *means;* but the final *end* of the divine government must be compatible with the nature of God himself. And when, according to the Scriptures, God "*shall be all in all*," sin and suffering, and every thing opposed to his nature must cease to exist.

In this view of the subject we see no clashing of objects in the administration of God's government. He rewards the virtuous because their conduct is right, and with a view to their happiness. And he punishes the wicked because their sins deserve it—that he may thus secure the ends of justice—and that the sufferer himself, though a *loser* by his misconduct, may be brought into obedience and righteousness. Means are employed as the case requires, but the great *end* in both is the same. The good parent rewards his dutiful, and punishes his disobedient child. And yet he loves them both, and his only object is to do them good. God is a Father. And while he renders unto every man according to his deeds, he means to produce in all "*the peaceable fruit of righteousness.*" See Heb. xii. 5–11.

Thus believing, we are enabled by faith to look beyond all rewards and punishments, and to contemplate with joy that glorious period foretold by the Prophet, when "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear, surely shall say, IN THE LORD HAVE I RIGHTEOUSNESS AND STRENGTH."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RESURRECTION.

In considering the subject before us, it should be understood that the word *resurrection* does not mean the same thing in every place where it occurs in the Scriptures. By attaching to this word one uniform signification, the mind will be strangely misled, and the doctrine of life and immortality sadly misapprehended. And indeed this wrong use of the word is one of the chief causes of the gross errors that are entertained in regard to the condition of our race in the spiritual and immortal life. Our Savior spoke of "the resurrection of damnation;" and he also declared that the children or subjects of the resurrection shall be "equal unto the angels." And if we suppose that in both places he had reference to the same thing, we must conclude either that he has contradicted himself, or else that his language does not convey to us the real meaning intended. An equality with the angels in heaven cannot surely be a state of condemnation to any soul of man. And if "they which shall be

accounted worthy to obtain that world, [the future life,] *and the resurrection of the dead*," shall be "*equal to the angels*," how can it be said of any one of the number that he shall come forth to "the resurrection of damnation?" It is readily perceived that these things present an insuperable difficulty, on the supposition that the word resurrection must be considered as bearing but one meaning. But give to the word its proper signification in each place, and the whole difficulty will at once disappear.

Speaking of the term rendered resurrection in the New Testament, Dr. Campbell says; "The word *anastasis*, or rather the phrase *anastasis ton nekron*, is indeed the common term by which the *resurrection*, properly so called, is denominated in the New Testament. Yet this is neither the only, nor the primitive import of the word *anastasis:* it denotes simply, being raised from inactivity to action, or from obscurity to eminence, or a return to such a state after an interruption. The verb *anistemi* has the like latitude of signification; and both words are used in this extent by the writers of the New Testament as well as by the Seventy. Agreeably, therefore, to the original import, rising from a seat is properly termed *anastasis;* so is *awaking* out of sleep, or

promotion from an inferior condition. The word occurs in this last sense, Luke 2 : 34. In this view, when applied to the dead, the word denotes, properly, no more than a *renewal of life* to them, in whatever manner this happen." Note on Matt. xxii. 23. This author, distinguished alike for his profound learning and Christian candor, maintains that the word *resurrection* primarily means simply *rising*. The passage in Luke to which he refers was spoken by Simeon with reference to the infant Jesus. "Behold, (said the aged man,) this child is set for the fall and *rising* again of many in Israel ; and for a sign which shall be spoken against." None can suppose that a rising from literal death into an immortal life is taught in this passage. It merely referred to the *promotion* of the remnant of Israel who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the *fall* of the remainder, who stumbled at the stone laid in Zion.

In accordance with this "primitive import" of the word resurrection, Paul says to the Ephesians, chap. ii. verse 1, "*And you hath he quickened,* who were *dead* in trespasses and sins." Wakefield renders the place ; "And you *hath he brought to life* with Christ." Here the persons addressed are represented as having received a new existence, being *quickened* from *death* into

a state of *life*. Having *died* to their old sins, they were brought to life with Christ. John says, 1st. Epis. iii. 14, "We know that we *have passed from death unto life*, [i. e. experienced a *resurrection*,] because we love the brethren." And a great number of passages of similar meaning will readily occur to every reader of the New Testament.

Parkhurst says of the word rendered resurrection, "In the lxx. [or Greek translation of the Old Testament] it is twice used, Lam. iii. 62. Zeph. iii. 8; in both which texts it answers to the Heb.—which means *to stand up*, *rise*, and in the former is opposed to *sitting*." On referring to the passages here named, we find that the former is a part of the Prophet's complaint, and reads; "Thou hast heard their reproach, O Lord, and all their imaginations against me; the lips of those that *rose* up against me, and their devise against me all the day." The enemies of Jeremiah's people had *risen up* against them; and this *rising* was called a *resurrection*. The latter passage is applied to God himself. "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I *rise up* to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations," &c. This *resurrection* "is opposed to sitting." God is represented in human speech and in a familiar

way, as *rising up* to execute judgment upon the kingdoms and nations of the earth. All this, which is very clearly understood, would, however, appear very absurd, if we were to suppose that the word *resurrection* wherever it occurs in the Scriptures, means a rising from literal death into a new state of existence!

In view of the foregoing, all can perceive the importance of carefully examining the connexion and subject of discourse in which the word *resurrection* is found. The meaning intended rests entirely upon the nature of the subject to which it is applied. Like the word *raise* or *raising*, in one place it may signify a mere coming forth from obscurity; and in another, man's entrance into the immortal state of being. It is written, Dan. xii. 2, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall *awake*, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." On investigating the chapter which contains this text, we find that the Prophet speaks of a particular *time;* and it is also a time that has been determined by our Lord, and is now past. This rising was to take place when there should "be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time"—"and from the time (it was prophesied) that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and *the abomination that maketh desolate*

set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days."

Now let the reader direct his attention to the 24th chap. of Matt., and it will be seen that our Lord referred to this very prophecy of Daniel, and declared its speedy fulfilment. Speaking of events that were shortly to come to pass, he said; "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house: Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And wo unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: *For there shall be great tribulation*, [mark the language of Daniel,] *such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.*" And after showing the near approach of these things by the parable of the fig tree, and declaring that the time was near, "even at the doors," Jesus said, "Verily I say unto you, *this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.*" The *time* of the rising up or resurrection spoken of

by Daniel the prophet, took place, therefore, when, according to his own prediction, it was "accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people," when the daily sacrifice was taken away, and when the abomination that made desolate was set up and stood in the holy place.

The Son of Man having received authority to execute judgment, there was then a general coming forth to judgment. Men were represented as being dead and even in their *graves*—as in the days of Ezekiel it was declared that the house of Israel were in their graves, when they were in bondage and degradation; and when it was promised that they should be brought up out of their graves, and reinstated in their own land. See Eze. xxxvii. 12-14. The word resurrection is used in the same sense in the 5th chapter of John, where, asserting his "authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of man," Jesus speaks of a "resurrection of damnation," or a rising up to judgment. He says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at

this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing : as I hear I judge, &c. The *subject* of discourse in this instance is the authority of the Son of man to execute judgment —and not the future state of being. The *time* of the judgment was declared to be at hand— "*the hour is coming, and* NOW IS." Man's immortal state of existence is not so much as hinted at in the whole connexion. And without attempting to pursue the subject any farther, we feel justified to conclude that both of the passages last named refer to the same event and time, which were determined by our Savior, and which occurred, according to his own word, before the close of the very generation in which he himself lived on earth !

Having thus cleared the way, and perhaps removed the difficulties from some minds, we are prepared to proceed at once to a consideration of the resurrection of man unto the future and immortal life, as taught in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our Savior himself did not frequently discourse on this subject, nor at great length. The reason is obvious. His disciples at first

knew but little of the nature of his kingdom, and were but slowly inducted into a knowledge of his doctrine. He declared when on earth that he had many things to say unto them, which they were not then prepared to receive. And he assured them that after his departure he would send the Comforter, even the spirit of truth, which should lead them unto all truth, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them. When he spake of his own death and resurrection, they understood not what he said. And after he was raised from the dead, "he appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their *unbelief* and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." Mark xvi. 14. Seeing the state of the disciples' minds, and knowing that they would in due time receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, and thus be enabled fully to understand "all the counsel of God," Jesus left them in comparative ignorance. But according to the promise which had been given, they afterwards received large portions of the Divine Spirit, and proclaimed upon the house-tops and in the streets the glad tidings of a perfect Gospel, and the blessings of a free and universal salvation.

In the course of our Savior's ministry on earth, however, he was particularly questioned in regard to his doctrine of the resurrection. The Sadducees, who utterly denied man's future life, as well as the existence of angels and spirits, thought to puzzle him by referring to the case of a certain woman who had been the wife of seven husbands, and demanding whose wife she should be in the resurrection. Here there can be no mistake as to the subject of discourse. It was the state of man beyond death of which the captious Sadducees inquired. Their question fully admitted the doctrine of life and immortality, and in view of this admission, they insisted upon knowing to which one of her husbands the departed woman should be wedded. Notwithstanding this query betrayed their entire ignorance of the whole subject—of the Scriptures and of the power of God—it afforded a fit opportunity for our Lord to declare his doctrine touching the immortal life. "And Jesus answering said unto them, the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of

the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him."

There are several things contained in this answer of our Lord that deserve to be particularly noticed. 1. By such as shall obtain that world of which he speaks, he evidently means all who shall be raised from the dead into the immortal state of existence. He speaks of such as shall obtain that world AND the resurrection from the dead. What he says of one subject or child of the resurrection, may therefore be said of all 2. It is not said that any man ever was or ever will be, really *worthy* of the resurrection to heavenly and divine life. But the answer treats of such as shall thus be ACCOUNTED. The Pharisees believed that but a part of the human race would be raised from the dead. It was perhaps in view o this notion that our Lord spoke of such as shall be *accounted* worthy, or "honored, to share in the resurrection," as Dr. Campbell has translated the passage. 3. But the answer before us shows that *all men* shall be raised from the dead; and the fact is abundantly proved in other parts of the New Testament. We have seen that in

view or the resurrection, Jesus declares of "the Father of spirits," "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for ALL live unto him." *All*, therefore, shall be *accounted* worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead and the future world. 4. The continuance of man's existence beyond the death of the body was shown by Moses at the bush, when he called the Deity the God of persons who had passed away from this world. The patriarchs of whom he spoke were still in existence; for the Lord, who was still their God, is not a God of the dead. But this proof of future life was not well understood until explained by our Savior. Hence it is said that Jesus Christ "hath brought life and immortality TO LIGHT *through the Gospel.*" And 5. The CONDITION in which man shall be raised from the dead is also most clearly taught in the answer of our Lord to the Sadducees. He declares that the subjects of the resurrection shall be the children of God, free from the power of death, and equal unto the angels. Such is the *condition* in which man shall live when raised to immortality. And hence it is truly said, "The LAST enemy shall be destroyed, death." No foe will remain after the final resurrection of the human family. And while Jesus the Savior of the world, "shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satis-

fied," God himself, rejoicing in his works, shall be "ALL IN ALL."

Concerning the subject of which Paul treats in 1st Cor. xv., there is no difference of belief. All agree that his subject *is the resurrection of man into the future and immortal state.* His testimony perfecty coincides with that of our Savior on the same subject. And it is a remarkable fact that in his extended discourse on this subject—the longest and fullest contained in the whole Bible—he says nothing about *judgment*, and speaks of no *suffering!* He contemplates the same happy and glorious end for all men: and declares that our whole race shall be made alive and blessed in the same Redeemer and Lord. After asserting and proving the resurrection of our Lord by a "great cloud of witnesses," he proceeds to say, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the *first*-fruits; *afterward* they that are Christ's at his coming. *Then* cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority

and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The LAST enemy shall be destroyed, death. For he hath put all enemies under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall *the Son also himself* be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be *all in all*."

Whatever may be meant by *the order of time* here mentioned, it is perfectly plain that *all men* are finally to be made alive IN Christ, and to become subject to him *even as he himself* will be subject unto God. And it is furthermore obvious that when this universal subjugation shall have been accomplished through "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," there will be no foe in existence to torment man, and GOD will be the life of every soul!

After showing that the animal body, which is sown in corruption, dishonor and weakness, shall die and return to the dust from which it was taken; the apostle declares that man shall rise in *incorruption*, in *glory*, in *power*, and in "*a spiritual body*." And he speaks not only of an *immortal* life; but of an existence IN THE HEAVENLY NATURE OF JESUS CHRIST! Still dis-

coursing of all who live and die in the earthy nature of Adam, and with no intimation that he speaks in a limited sense, he says, "And as we have borne the image of the *earthy*, we shall also bear *the image of the heavenly*." He declares that "we shall *all* be changed," raised incorruptible," and "put on immortality." And when all shall thus be delivered from the power of death, and made alive in a *spiritual body* and a *heavenly nature*, the LAST enemy will be destroyed, the Messiah's mediatorial labors will be finished, and he will then resign his kingdom to the Father, "*that God may be all in all.*"

Such, then, will be the final and glorious condition of *the human family*—of all who belong to the race of Adam—and such will be the ultimate and happy result of the work of redemption through him who is the Mediator between God and man, and "THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD." We know not the precise *time* when man shall be exalted to the bliss of immortality, "to glorify God and fully to enjoy him forever"—we ask not to know. Whether he is to rise as soon as the spirit departs from the cold tenement of clay, or at some more distant period, is with us a matter of no concern. It is sufficient for us to know that he whom the Father sent to be "the Savior of the world," who has declared that he will draw

all men unto himself, and assured us that all shall be raised from the dead and become equal unto the angels, will finally destroy the *last* enemy of man, and bring all into the *same subjection* in which he himself will bow to that "*God who is the Savior of all men.*"

In view of this great and glorious consummation of the economy of divine grace through the Redeemer, we rest satisfied, and rejoice with unspeakable joy. And in conclusion we need only say, in the language of the Methodist Commentator, CLARKE, "Thus we find, that the salvation from sin here, is as extensive and complete as the *guilt* and *contamination* of sin; death is conquered, hell disappointed, the devil confounded, AND SIN TOTALLY DESTROYED. Here is glorying, *to Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto his Father, be glory, and dominion, for ever and ever. Amen!* Hallelujah! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen, and Amen."

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